MY OLD COUSIN:

or,

A PEEP INTO COCHIN - CHINA. A Robel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

ROMANTIC FACTS, OR WHICH IS HIS WIFE? VERONICA, OR THE MY TEROOUS STRANGER, &c.

ARATUS T CILICIA.

You are of this man's family.

Thom art not of the fashion of these times.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I.

Landan:

Printed at the Minerva Press for
A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1819.

TO THE

Memory

0F

CHRISTOPHER PAUL, Esq.

A RISPECTABLE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN,

WHO LIVED TO AN ALMOST PATRIARCHAL AGE,

AT NAFFERTON HALL,

IN THE EAST RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

THE FOLLOWING WORK IS DEDICATED

BY HIS EINSMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

• He died in the ninety-second year of his age—about 1734.

VOL. I. 'B

PREFACE.

TO THE READER.

Drawings from nature are, or ought to be, held in higher estimation than the mere efforts of fancy, though finished by the first of masters; it is therefore to be hoped that the following pages will not be considered the less interesting, when the reader is informed that the character of Mr. St. Paul is faithfully delineated from an oral tradition of the author's maternal grandfather respecting an "old cousin," from R 2 whom

whom he derived considerable estates in Yorkshire; and is meant, at the same time, as a record of what many country gentlemen were nearly a hundred years ago.

The place where this "ancient worthy" resided was 'not certainly any way resembling "Napperton Abbey," but merely entitled to the epithet of "hall," from its superiority to the neighbouring cottages, and the undoubted antiquity of the occupying family.

The Abbey is nevertheless no imaginary structure, but may be yet seen at Watton, near Beverley; and is introduced, because, from neglect, its buildings, pictures, and furniture,

PREFACE.

seem in such a rapid state of decay, that most probably before the present century has half expired, it will be merely said of them, as Virgil says of Troy,

" Fuit Ilium chingens gloria." Ex. it.

The story itself is acknowledged to be fictitious; and, excepting some part of the St. Paul family, the "dramatis personæ" are taken from "the world as it goes."

The funeral rites and other ceremonial observances brought forward, have been almost invariably kept up by the author's maternal connexions; and however singular they appear to the southern inhabitants of Great B 3 Littain.

Britain, may still be witnessed in many counties of the north.

For the extraordinary adventures in Cochin-China, no apology is offered, more than that there is no such thing as fixing limits to the absurdity of people professing such a preposterous doctrine as that of transmigration of souls.

MY OLD COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

From this fair union, not of sordid gain,

But merit similar and mutual love,

Frue source of lineal virtue, sprung a train

Of youths and virgins:

Around their worthy parents goodly rose

These gen'rous scions.

WLST.

"BLESS me!" exclaimed Mrs. William St. Paul, "what a miracle is about to happen!—If my eyes do not strangely impose upon me, your 'ald cousin's' confidential follower, Kester Hilton, has opened the gate leading to

the kitchen; and I declare he has entered our premises, and is hobbling along the gravel walk."

Mr. William St. Paul, in this instance, seemed to require ocular demonstration to convince him of his wife's accuracy, for he threw down his book and hastened to the window.—" It is Kester assuredly, my dear," said he, "and he carries something strongly resembling a folded letter. His appearance here is truly a miracle, for, as far as I can recollect, neither 'my cousin' nor any of his household has come within our gates these eighteen years."

"Never since I entered them certainly," resumed the lady, "and that is very nearly eighteen years ago. Kester's present approach, love, I hope will convince you that the mark of respect which

I with

I with such difficulty prevailed upon you to pay to the memory of Mrs. Betty St. Paul, by putting on black for her, has been reported to the old gentleman, and not given the offence you apprehended."

"I never gave him any cause to be displeased with me," said Mr. William.

" He thinks," continued the lady—
" or, if you please, I will make this amendment to my speech—did think differently. Your marriage with me, the child of a family brought in with the Hanoverian Succession, was to his Jacobite feelings the most mortal of offences; and I must not flatter myself, notwithstanding the sanguine hopes I will allow Kester's appearance at first inspired, he can ever pardon it."

R 5 "Whatever

"Whatever he might or may think," returned Mr. William, "I must repeat, I never gave any just cause for his displeasure. Guardians, thank Heaven! as my dear father lived till I was more than of age, I wanted not-advice I never once thought of asking on a subject like my marriage, where, if in any case, a man ought surely to act for himself; besides, so trifling was the intercourse existing between our venerable relative and my father, and such the extraordinary temper of the former, that, had I telt disposed to solicit his sanction to my union with you, the observance of such a form would have been more likely to offend than the neglect of it.—'What does the lad mean,' I dare say he would have exclaimed on my application, 'by troubling

troubling me on the subject of his marrisge?—my interference could alone be interpreted into a tacit acknowledgment of him as my intended heir—a notion I by no means wish to encourage. My estates, Heaven be praised! are unentailed—I may now bequeath them to Jack or Tom anybody—may give them to my sisters, to make puppies of themselves with in their old age-may found an hospital for testy bachelors; and I will not deprive myself of this privilege by promise, or shadow of promise, to any living creature."

"That somehow or other he was dissatisfied with your marriage," said Mrs. William St. Paul, "is, however, plain, as he has never noticed you since."

" And that I can rest satisfied without

his notice is quite as obvious; for, during the time he has apparently forgotten me, I have been one of the most contented, happiest of mankind," observed Mr. William, affectionately pressing his wife's hand.

"Whether he feel more interested about you and yours in the year 84, than you suppose him to have been in 66, will be made manifest by unsealing this," said Mrs. William St. Paul, presenting her husband with a letter which was brought in at that moment by a female servant.

The packet was folded up in a form nearly square, appeared more bulky than an ordinary epistle, and was superscribed in a large old-fashioned character—" To Mister William Saint Paul, at Marton."

"The shield bearing three cross, crosslets, with a leopard's head for their crest," remarked Mr. William, looking on the seal, "would have announced this as a missive from Napperton Abbey, though we had not been eye-witnesses of its bearer."

It is not to be supposed that the astonished pair paid so much respect to the armorial bearings of their ancient house, as to hesitate breaking the wax on which they were impressed.

After the performance of this indispensable ceremony, two inclosures presented themselves: one contained two black enamelled mourning-rings, inscribed—" Eliz. Saint Paul, ob. 10th Sept. 1784, Æ. 84;" within the other was written as follows:—

[&]quot; KINSMAN

" KINSMAN AND FRIEND,

- "It hath pleased the almightie Disposer of events to deprive us of our worthie sister and companion Elizabeth, who changed this life, we truste for a better, according to the date expressed on the rings herewith forwarded, and which I crave you and your wife (unknown) will accept, and weare in memorie of the defunct.
- "The sorrowful event above mentioned has caused a vacancy in my house, which I would right willinglie supplie by one of mine own name.
- "You must not hence infer I am quite so doting, though in my ninetieth yeare, as to think of matrimonie—that is altogether out of the question. Kinsman, it is to you I look for the occupier of the emptie chair at my table, which, understanding

understanding that you are the father of eight or nine children, you may perhaps afford me, without seeming to yourself to sustain a very serious privaion.

- " If, after dulie considering what is above said, you think fitting to intrust to me and my surviving sister Mary one of your young people, forward to me, at your leisure, the respective christian names of youre several sons. Your first-borne, if you thinke good, may be named among them; but I would not desire to move him from the house which must one daie be his own: for if my memorie doe not mislead me, I think your Marton estate, liable to a certain dowrie to, your widow, is intailed upon your heirs-male lawfully proceeding.
 - " With heartie good wishes for the health

health and welfare of you all, I rest your loving cousin,

" CHRISTOPHER SAINT PAUL.

"Dated from the Abbey of Napperton, October the seventh (N. S.) 1784."

"I suppose, my dear love," interrogated Mr William, "you will agree with me as to the expediency of complying with our venerable relative's request, and that the sooner we do so, the better he will be satisfied with us?"

A tear dimmed the lustre of Mrs. William St. Paul's dark eyes, but it did not render them or their owner less admirable or valuable in the sight of her husband—it was the unequivocal testimony of maternal tenderness, which could not be suppressed at the idea of parting

parting with one of her offspring, even to a situation promising eventual permanent advantages, and those at a distance from his native home not exceeding two short miles.

- "The world," cried Mrs. William,
 "and probably, in the end, our own
 family, would blame us if we neglected
 this opportunity of cultivating the friendship of your old relative; therefore, much
 as it unquestionably will cost our feelings to allow an almost stranger to
 'teach the young ideas' of our child
 how to shoot,' I suppose we have no
 other alternative than compliance."
 - "You consent, then," resumed Mr. William St. Paul, "to my answering this unlooked-for communication affir matively?"

Another

Another cloud partially obscured the bright eyes of the anxious mother.

"Of one thing, my dearest love," said Mr. William, "you may rest assured, that 'the ideas' of our devoted child will not be encouraged 'to shoot' incorrectly in the soil into which it is to be transplanted; for 'my old cousin,' with all his eccentricities, is invariably allowed to be a careful cultivator of the moral virtues; and, though personally adverse to the Brunswick dynasty, allows his dependents to pray for them, and serve them with all due loyalty."

"We must certainly oblige him," observed Mrs. William—" his cannot be long the 'house of bondage' to whichever of our children he may select; and, after all, we may have—nay," added she, with

with a more lively tone and clearer eye, "must (for your cousin owns to ninety) have the training of those 'shoots' in which we are so naturally and deeply interested."

Mr. St. Paul opened his writing-desk, whilst his lady rung to order Kester. Hilton whatever refreshment he might prefer during his necessary sojourn in the servants' hall.

"The old gentleman went away the moment he delivered his letter," said the female who answered the bell.

"I am sorry for it," exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul in almost the same breath—"I fear he will consider us a very inhospitable set."

"He most likely, in this precipitate retreat, obeyed the commands of his master," remarked the gentleman; "for

if you observe, my decream 'old cousin' only requests me to 'meward' to him 'at leisure' the 'name of our several sons.' I will not have ver keep him long in suspense as to a r intentions, for to-morrow shall put him in possession of them.'

The succeeding evening was scarcely long enough, in the opinion of our affectionate parents, to allow time for the composition of the important letter, which can the following day was most probably to fix the fate and fortune of one of their beloved children, perhaps sign the sentence of his banishment trem the paternal roof for many a long, long year.

Several sheets of paper were torn to atoms, flung out of the window, or committed to the flames, before Mr. William

- St. Paul could frame a letter to his mind—one was written in a style too abject, another was not sufficiently expressive of gratitude.
- "The next attempt," at length exclaimed the writer, "shall, I am determined, be the final one: so it proved—it gave birth to the following sentences:—

" To Christopher Saint Paul, Esq. Napperton Abbey.

" DEAR SIR,

"We feel truly gratified by your affectionate proposal of incorporating one of our beloved children into your domestic circle, and trust that whichever of them you think proper to select select will prove invariably anxious to serve and oblige you, at all times and in all things, to the utmost of his power.

"We have four daughters and five sons, all (and I flatter myself we are truly grateful to the Almighty for such an inestimable blessing) healthy, active, and, as far as we have been able to remark, well-tempered and disposed: the names of the latter are William, George, Charles, Mathew, and Rodney; the eldest of them is sixteen, the youngest four; the intermediate three in a regular gradation of two years each from their elder brother.

"Whenever you may feel disposed to receive your intended protegé, he shall be ready to attend; and you will add to the obligation we already feel, in pointing

pointing out the mode by which you would choose him to be conveyed to Napperton Abbey.

"We sincerely condole with you and your worthy sister on the lamented decease of Mrs. Elizabeth St. Paul; and with many thanks for your obliging memorials of that afflictive event, subscribe ourselves.

"Yours, gratefully and affectionately,

- "WILLIAM ST. PAUL,
- " MARGARET ST. PAUL."

A boy of fourteen, the only male servant retained at Marton, was the bearer of this epistle. The interval which necessarily elapsed between his departure for and return from Napperton, seemed tediously

tediously protracted; it was passed, as may be expected, by Mr. and Mrs. William in anticipations as to the result of their letter, and conjectures which of their sons would prove the object of their aged cousin's choice.

"The lot will not fall on George for a certainty," said Mr. St. Paul, smiling; "and I should not wonder if the inclusion of that name in our list do not damp our good cousin's inclination to increase his family."

"I should feel the same apprehension," returned the lady, "did not the name of *Charles* tread close upon its heels: if the latter had luckily been coupled with *James*, its effect would have been magical enough to influence the old gentleman's choice irresistibly."

"As it is, I think," said Mr. William, "it will insure master Charles's election."

"And I shall rejoice," resumed Mrs. St. Paul, "if he be preferred to Matt or Rodney: poor fellows! they are too young to either feel or see the necessity of cheerful acquiescence in the humours of their old-fashioned cousins."

"Matt has assuredly a certain stiffness of opinion, which will not bend very readily to what he may consider an unreasonable yoke," was the remark of Mr. St. Paul: "but," continued he, "wherever our relative's choice may fall, we must rest satisfied; for I have unreservedly yielded him the privilege of appropriating to himself whichever of our "olive branches" he may think p.oper."

VOL. I. C In

In due time a second formally-folded epistle from the ancient squire of Napperton Abbey made its appearance. It expressed the writer's satisfaction with his "goode cousin's" ready attention to his proposals, and nominated "Mathere" as his intended inmate.

"I have a righte wonderous prejudice in favoure of his name," wrote the old gentleman—" it has beene borne by manie whose memories I hold in highe regard—by one, moreover, whose judicial fame and uprightness were honourable to the age which gave him birth; my deceased father remembered him well: I allude to sir Mathew Hale, some time lord-chief-justice of the Common Pleas. I pray Mathew St. Paul may walk in his waies. What say you, goode

goode cousin, to our training him to the lawe? By the blessing of God you may then live to be the father of a lord-chief-justice, or a serjeant-at-lawe at the least. But of this, the youngster's future destination, more when we meet, which I would wish to be with all convenient speed—if you please, to-morrow.

"My age will be apologie sufficient for this seeming haste—I have not time to indulge what Horace entitleth 'spem longum;' in a word, I wish to see as much as I can of my intended——"

Here a word was erased, which Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul fancied to have been "heir;" the writer had supplied its place with a repetition of the term "inmate."

"I am, you see," continued the ve-

nerable squire, "a sanguine old mortal in my plans and procedures.

"As your wife has not yet seene our old-fashioned abode and its no less old-fashioned occupants, she may as well witness the surrender of Mathew to our guardianship, i. c. if she can refrain from such manifestations of sorrow at parting from him as may possess the young man with a notion she is leaving him in the power of savages. Of this you will be the fittest judge, and must act accordingly."

The natural inference to be drawn from this letter was, that the old squire of Napperton Abbey expected his juvenile protegé to be conducted to the place of his destination by his parents, and with this arrangement they determined to comply.

- "It is now time," said Mr. William, "to announce to our family the loss we are about to sustain."
- " Poor Matt!" sighed the mother,
 " I fear he will bear the information with the least philosophy. I don't know what is to become of him at Napperton Abbey, for I suppose companions of his own age will be inadmissible there."

The nursery was the scene of domestic assemblage; there Mr. William St. Paul declared the wish of his "old cousin," and his own compliance.

- "Which of us is to go?" and—" I hope I am not to leave you, papa?" were the immediate and general exclamations.
- "The worthy Mr. St. Paul has requested," said the father of the surround-

ing group, "that Mathew may take up his abode at the Abbey."

At the first Matt hung his head, and manifested signs of dissatisfaction with the arrangement; but in a few minutes his countenance brightened.

"Do you think the old gentleman will keep me a pony?" said the little fellow; "if he does, I'll ride over to Marton every day. Oh! I shall like to go amazingly!" continued he, without waiting for an answer to his interrogation—" Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary are such coinical old folks, I shall like to see them—and then the Abbey, too, is said to be so full of curious things."

"Old Betty Dry says there are ghosts in it," exclaimed one of the elder girls
—"Oh, Matt, I am so sorry for you!

I would

I would not live there for the whole world."

"Why, I don't care a pin for the ghosts," replied Matt with great spirit, "for I have heard papa say a thousand thousand times, such things are only invented by silly old women like nurse Dry to frighten children with, and I'm sure papa would not have said so if he had not believed it to be quite entirely true."

A word from papa called every one to order; and after a solemn exhortation to Mathew, that he should endeavour in every thing to serve and oblige his good relations at Napperton Abbey, which was delivered in the presence of his brothers and sisters, he dismissed the children to their beds.

Matt did not however sleep with his usual soundness; the anticipated novelties he was to witness on the morrow occupied his mind too fully to allow of uninterrupted repose: with the first dawn of morning he was at the window, and never did day, to mortal conception, "come on more heavily" than at this important period to our impatient youth.

It was seven o'clock before papa's voice in the passage announced that he was up, and preparing for the little journey to Napperton Abbey. Matt immediately opened the door, and presented himself fully equipped for mounting a galloway, borrowed for the occasion from a neighbouring farmer.

At nine the horses were at the gate,

and within a few minutes after that hour, papa, mamma, and Matt, were on their way to "my old cousin's."

I cannot say the conversation, during this short ride, was of the most lively or entertaining sort; on the side of Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul it was confined to such advice as might be expected to proceed from the lips of anxious parents about to commit such a sacred trust as "the training up of a child," into the hands of persons pretty nearly strangers to them.

Matt promised undeviating obedience, but occasionally interrupted the parental orations by interrogatories respecting his old cousins and their residence.

The time-worn turrets of the latter were soon in sight, and certainly never c 5 appeared

appeared with a more sombre aspect than at the present moment: the day was gloomy, the season late autumn, and the spirits of the approaching party by no means exuberant.

"It is truly a gloomy prison-like place," whispered Mrs. William; and as the gentleman addressed could advance nothing in contradiction of the assertion, he remained silent.

Both parents mechanically looked towards Matt, to ascertain if possible the impression made upon him by surrounding objects. Matt certainly and obviously participated in the feelings of his father and mother; but there was no opportunity for further remark, as they now perceived Kester Hilton apparently watching their progress from a gate opening to an avenue, Where lofty walnuts form'd a lonely shade,

And sun scarce gift the solitary glade,

Weston.

and which led up to the habitation of the friends they were on the point of visiting.

CHAPTER II.

The storied arras, source of fond delight,
With old achievement charms the wilder'd sight;
And, still with heraldry's rich hues imprest,
On the dim window glows the pictor'd crest;
The skreen unfolds its many-colour'd charts,
The carpet, blooming flow'rs and bleeding hearts.

ROGERS.

THE edifice here designated Napperton Abbey had not formed more than a tenth part of the original structure, the ichnography of which was yet to be distinctly traced in an adjoining field, completely overspread with lines of foundation. The remains were sufficient to prove

prove the former magnificence of the place: they consisted of a long square pile, flanked at three of its corners with octagon towers; from an angle extended an irregular line of building, the lower part of which had in former days formed a cloistered communication with the main body of the Abbey, and the upper a dornitory. The whole, with the exception of a projecting Gothic window, richly sculptured with stone in the most vivid style, was erected of brick.

The present principal entrance opened from the centre of the ancient cloister, which still retained its pointed windows, and was approached through a square court, of which one division formed a small bowling-green, and the other formal knots and parternes of flowers: the

whole was skirted by a venerable yew hedge cut into a variety of whimsical forms.

Our equestrians were directed by Kester Hilton, who followed them from the walnut avenue, to the court above mentioned, where they alighted at what, in the vulgar phraseology of Yorkshire, is denominated "a horsing-stone," which for many a year had assisted the fair dames of Napperton Abbey in mounting and dismounting their palfreys, and beneath which was an arched shelter for the "Cerberus" who mounted guard on the outworks during the dreary season of night.

The venerable proprietor of this antique mansion received his visitors at its principal portal with a smiling countenance; he held out the "right hand of fellowship"

fellowship" to Mr. William, patted Mathew encouragingly on the head, and, according to the fashion of his day, saluted their female companion. There was sufficient of benignity in the aspect of this reverend personage to dispossess Mrs. William St. Paul, at the first glance, of every thing like prejudice against him, and to secure her from exhibiting such testimonies of sorrow at parting with Matt, as the old squire seemed, from his letter, to anticipate.

"Nothing ill can dwell in such a temple," was consequently the mental exclamation of the good lady; and her son visibly participated in her feelings, for he followed his ancient protector along the passage with smiles of satisfaction.

A delineation of the exterior of such a prepossessing

a prepossessing individual as old Mr. St. Paul, the reader may probably consider as his due; the artist will therefore endeavour to make his portrait correct, and as he draws "from nature," flatters himself the likeness will be tolerably striking.

The ancient squire had, in his juvenile days, been full six feet high, and did not, even at ninety, fall far short of that standard: his person was yet good, and by no means destitute of grace: his face had the oval of the unfortunate Stuart family, with a high-raised aquiline nose, somewhat pointed chin, dark penetrating eyes, and a particularly clear brown complexion, with as few wrinkles as are generally perceptible on a face of sixty 'years' standing. His dress harmonized admirably with his venerable

figure,

figure, and gave him the appearance of a picture, in the costume of the earliest part of the last century, walking from its frame: his head was covered with a copiously-flowing peruke of auburn hair, and surmounted with a triangular cocked hat: the embroidered ends of his neckeloth extended to the bottom of his waist, and the width and shortness of his coat-sleeves displayed a shirt beautifully plaited, and confined at the wrist with large sparkling gold buttons.

He walked with a firmness rarely to be seen at an advanced period of life, and seemed to carry a gold-headed cane more for ornament than use, which was particularly striking, as he preceded Mr. and Mrs. William along the passage leading to a room, the walls of which were covered with portraits of the Eng-

lish monarchs down to Anne Stuart, and the floor with painted canvas, chequered in imitation of black and white marble. Here they were received by Mrs. Mary St. Paul, a lady, allowing for difference of sex, the exact counterpart of her brother.

In strict conformity with ancient hospitality, a profusion of refreshments, consisting of ham, tongue, marmalades, and fruit, accompanied by mead and spiced wine in silver goblets, was immediately presented.

Mr. William very judiciously introduced a conversation respecting the history and antiquity of the Abbey, and the impression its venerable aspect had made upon his wife. This was the subject of all others most acceptable to the old spinster and her brother, who perfectly fectly idolized the place of their nativity, and would not have exchanged its mouldering towers for the most sumptuous palace.

"It was founded," said the old gentleman, "during the time of the celebrated crusades in the reign of Richard Cour de Lion, by an ancestor of ours, whose personal infirmities prevented his attendance on the sovereign to Palestine. Fifty nuns, of the Gilbertine order, were placed in it, bound by the most solemn vows to offer up hourly prayers for the success of the holy wars. At the dissolution of religious houses, Henry the Eighth granted it to sir Roger B—, and by him, for the sake of the materials, it was condemned to immediate and entire destruction. Fortunately

nately the St. Pauls had yet estates in the neighbourhood, and the pious possessor of them, at a very exorbitant price, purchased and preserved all that now remains of the originally extensive Abbey of Napperton. At it he took up his permanent abode, and since that period it has been the chosen, I may say cherished seat of our family; and I trust," added he, after a short pause, "the name of St. Paul may yet flourish through many a revolving year, upon this consecrated, hallowed ground."

The enthusiastic speaker concluded with an energy that likened his last words to a solemn invocation, and scemed so much affected, that Mr. William thought it amounted to an act of humanity to interrupt him, by remarking that

his wife would feel high gratification in going over the different apartments of the place.

- "The shutters are open, Mary?" said Mr. St. Paul.
- "Yes, and Mary Johnson in waiting to attend our good cousins," answered the aged spinster.
- "Mary's attendance shall be dispensed with for this time," cried the master of the family, with a lively smile, "for I am determined to be the shewman myself to-day."

He then arose from his high-backed leather chair, resumed his cane, and with an air of infinite importance led the way through the cloistered passage to a large hall, lighted by the projecting Gothic window before mentioned, which yet retained many tolerable specimens of stained stained glass, exhibiting themselves in the forms of crosses, mitres, and frequent repetitions of the crosslets and leopard's head which constituted the armorial bearings of the founder and his lineal descendants.

The walls were covered with scripture-pieces on canvas and panel, probably designed as patterns for tapestry:
Belshazzar's feast, and queen Esther petitioning the Persian monarch for her oppressed people, were conspicuous for chaste execution and brilliant colouring.

"This room," said the ancient ciceroni, "was, in monastic times, a private refectory for the lady abbess of the house: here, as you will by and by observe, we yet dine—the oak table is the same which has been in use for centuries."

From this hall they proceeded to a spacious parlour hung with tapestry, the subject of which was nearly concealed by a long series of family pictures.

"The portrait on panel at the upper end of the room," said the guide, "represents the pious founder of this place: he is, you observe, in complete armour, and yet it is recorded of him that he was a cripple from his birth. This, with some, impeaches the authenticity of the painting—to me it is a proof of how gladly he reould have been habilimented as a warrior, and how severely he must have felt the infirmities which prevented him being so. His immediate descendants hang, in regular succession, below him.

"At the head of the party on the other

other side," pointing to the right, " you behold Francis St. Paul, who may well be entitled the saviour of his house, for he it was who stopped the Vandal rage of sir Roger B-, and whom we have to thank for the interesting relies of Napperton Abbey. He had large estates at Yarm, alias Yarum, in the North Riding of our county, several of which he alienated in order to recover possession of this sacred and favourite spot. His son and three daughters are in the line with him: the first was a beauty in her day, and an attendant at the gloomy court of queen Mary the First.

"The next series commences with my dear and right worthy father. I wish it may be justly reported, in after times, that I walked as regularly in his upright ways, as my wig and cravat testify testify I have copied his attire. The likeness was admirable, and the picture considered one of sir Godfrey Kneller's masterpieces.

"The matron to the left is my honoured mother, the younger females my sisters Margaret, Elizabeth, and Mary. The artist who drew them seems to have been a pretty close imitator of sir Peter Lely, which is evidenced by his affected attitudes and sleepy halfshut eyes.

"The little urchin in green, who completes the family-party, is, or rather was your humble servant and cousin, as he appeared some fourscore years since.—What think you of the little gentleman, sir Mathew, hey?" interrogated the old squire.

"He's a funny little fellow," smiled Vol. I. D Matt,

Matt, "and wears the prettiest coat I ever saw in my life: and the hat, mamma—why, I declare, it's trimmed with gold!"

" I am glad you like them," exclaimed the delighted Mr. St. Paul-" faith I am heartily glad of it: I see my young cousin and I shall agree right well. Through life I have admired the fashions of my youth-there was in them a just distinction of ranks; the squire and the squire's son might then be known without difficulty from farmer John and his son; now, I suppose there is not a man or boy in any of our villages but wears the same cut of coat with my lord and my lord's heir.—The coat and hat that you have discernment enough to like, Matt, were made for me in London, by the young and everto-be-lamented duke of Gloucester's tailor, and in them I sat to sir James Thornhill when he took my likeness: they are yet preserved—to-morrow you shall see them, shall be allowed the privilege of putting them on—ay, and were it not for the sables in which respect to my recently-departed sister now clothes us, you should wear them too."

Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul could not avoid exchanging a smile at the energy of their ancient friend, and the outré appearance which poor Matt would have been compelled to assume, had it not been for his mourning habit.

After Mr. St. Paul had done expatiating on the portraits, he called the attention of his auditors to a tolerable representation of the youthful David's D2 victory

victory over the Philistine of Gath, which he assured them had formerly ornamented the chapel of the house. Nor were the carpet (which occupied little more than the centre of the floor) and the stuffed-backed chairs, enriched with "golden fruit and ever-blooming flowers," passed over in silence.

"These," observed the senior St. Paul, "are existing proofs, that however much their portraits encourage an opinion that the females of our family neglected not the adornment of their persons, yet they found time for the embellishment of other and more durable objects than themselves. I fear, my good kinswoman, those of the next generation will not have monuments to exhibit of their aunts' and grandmothers' industry like these chairs and carpets."

The

The next apartment visited was above stairs, and, in modern language, would have been denominated a drawing-room -at Napperton Abbey it was yeleped "the south parlour." Its arras was in delightful preservation, and presented, in compartments divided by dark-brown wainscot, the history of Sampson, from the sacrifice offered by Manaoh and his wife, to the dreadful catastrophe in the banqueting-house at Gaza: in the concluding scene the designer had been particularly successful—Raphael could not have expressed horror and astonishment more naturally than they appeared in the countenance of a woman, from whose hands a knife is falling, with which she seems to have been dividing. a piece of fruit.

The oaken pannels on the chimney

side of the room presented portraits of old Mr. St. Paul and his sisters at anadvanced period of life.

A picture with two fox-hounds surmounted a narrow chimney-glass, elaborately cut around the edges and mounted in a plain gold frame; the carpet and chairs, together with an antique sofa, denominated by the old gentleman a "squab," were again presented, in proof that the ladies of former days allowed not their needles to rust in idleness.

From the south parlour they advanced along a matted passage to the state bed-room. Its dimensions were the same as the great half below, and it was lighted by a similar projecting window: its arcient cabinets of inlaid walnut with pannels of looking-glass, and

its high chimneypiece* with a bassorelievo representation of the wise and foolish virgins, well cut in wood, deservedly drew forth the admiration of Mr. and Mrs. William: and the eloquence of their aged relation: the only remark of the latter on the high-canopied bed, of somewhat faded green velvet and tarnished lace, was, that Henry the Eighth reposed in it one night, and, for any thing he knew, might plan the destruction of the house whilst he found a safe and hospitable reception under its roof, as he was recorded to have done at Thornton† Abbey, in Lincolnshire.

Another

^{&#}x27;This chimneypiece is at Burton Agnes, the Boyntons' seat.

⁺ Vide Gent's curious History of Hull.

Another passage, of no extraordinary width, conducted to a lofty and very spacious room, nearly surrounded by oaken presses of books.

- "This," cried Mr. St. Paul, striking his cane upon the floor, "is the place which, of all others, I most venerate: I am assured, by a well-read antiquary, that it contains the most perfect collection of monastic books extant.
- "Here you may peruse manuscripts in perfect preservation, which have furnished instruction to many a departed generation.
- "Look at this richly-illuminated missal—its embellishments cannot be surpassed by all the boasted efforts of modern art: it was a present to the abbess from Edward the Third's queen, Philippa;

lippa; portraits of herself and her numerous family are beautifully depicted in the titlepage: and do but remark the peculiar delicacy and correctness of the characters in which it is written.

"The next presses contain the earliest specimens of the useful art of printing—' principes editiones' sufficient to gratify the most rapacious book-fancier. The remaining cases are furnished with productions in various languages, and respecting almost every art and science; among them Matt will find the life and writings of his great namesake, sir Mathew Hale, whose example I shall use every endeavour to press upon his notice, as highly worthy of imitation.

"But I perceive, my good cousins, that your eyes wander towards the green

curtains* at the extremity of the room: you fancy, I doubt not, that they conceal the images I worship; for unquestionably, like the rest of my neighbours, you suspect me to be a rank papist, and found your opinion on this condemning proof, that I attend not the parish church. My motives for this apparent neglect of religion are, and probably will be ever confined to my own bosom: that I attempt not to influence others to act as I do in this instance, is plain, from the regularity with which my household conform to all the ordinances of the established faith of the country.

The ancient library, as well as other apartments here described, are pretty faithfully drawn from Watton Abbey, though any one visiting it will look in vain for the "green curtains" and "illuminated missal."

country. I notice this more particularly at present, to prevent your indulgence of a notion that I shall endeavour to pervert or eradicate those religious principles which, as far as his tender years would allow, you have doubtless instilled into the mind of my young charge; and at the same time I beg leave to assure you, he will never run a greater risk of offending me than by negligently performing the duties required by his religious profession.

"But I must not permit even this serious subject to allow me to forget the 'green curtains," continued he, at the same time withdrawing them, and exhibiting likenesses of king James the Second and his queen, Mary d'Este, and their son.

"These are not probably the idols
D 6 you

you expected, though they are certainly representations I greatly respect. To the gracious sovereign you behold, my worthy father swore a solemn allegiance, and to the lineal descendants of the same monarch I cannot forget that, in the last moments of my departed parent, I vowed an unalterable fidelity."

As if to prevent further remark on the pictures just exhibited, or the declaration the sight of them had occasioned, he turned to others of a very different description, which occupied vacancies between the bookcases.

"This Lucretia," remarked the old squire, "is universally admired for beauty of colouring and expression of countenance, though, till very lately, such was the delicacy of my virgin sisters, it has not been publicly shewn; yet, for my own part, I think the redundant charms of Adonis's companion, near the door, an infinitely more indelicate display."

The ringing of a bell, which Mr. St. Paul informed his visitors announced the serving of dinner, put a stop to farther progress through the house; this, however, was no very serious loss, for it would only have shewn the inconvenient intricacies, almost labyrinths, of an ancient country mansion, and conducted the explorers to spacious sleeping-rooms, which, though furnished with many comforts, exhibited not a single modern luxury.

"You see," observed the master of this curious place, as they descended the principal staircase, remarkable for nothing

thing but its ponderous oak bannisters and dark-coloured steppings rubbed bright—" you see we country folks, in defiance of town practice, continue to take our principal meal at noon. For the extreme lateness of the fashionable dinner-hour I never could satisfactorily account; the arrangement unquestionably originated among the commercial part of society, anxious for a long morning in which to transact their business; and, as such, I should have thought it not very likely to be adopted by the higher classes, who pretty generally affect a sovereign contempt for every thing connected with trade, except when necessity drives them to the city in pursuit of a wealthy wife."

Such a repast crowned the board as might

might be expected from the old English notions of Mr. St. Paul and his sister. Eels of extraordinary length and thickness (the produce of the Abbey ponds). a noble sirloin of beef, and a capacious plumpudding, were conspicuous objects. The madeira and sherry of modern days were looked for in vain; their place was supplied by genuine homebrewed October, foaming in silver tankards, in one of which, the old gentleman's favourite, commonly known in the family by the epithet of "the squire's pin* tankard," floated a toast well powdered with grated nutmeg and ginger.

Τo

^{*} The pin tankard of former days took its name from a row of pegs placed within it at equal distances, by which the draughts of the different drinkers were regulated. Such a one is still preserved in the author's family.

To the dinner succeeded a dark blueand-gold china bowl of punch, prepared by the experienced hand of Kester Hilton, whose peculiar skill in combining its sweets and sours was proudly dwelt on by his ancient master. The punchbowl was flanked with pipes and tobacco; nor were the ladies forgotten mead and sack were presented to them in small round silver cups, introduced by the name of tumblers.

Mr. St. Paul soon brandished his weapon, as he denominated his pipe, and this seemed the signal for the departure of the females, as Mrs. Mary immediately rose from her chair, and leaning on the arm of her cousin's wife, proceeded as rapidly as rheumatism would allow to the low parlour.

" Women

far

"Women always take flight at the first fire," a joke Mr. St. Paul never failed sporting the moment he was left to the enjoyment of his pipe and the converse of his male visitants, was scarcely uttered, before the party was increased by the arrival of a gentleman named Sharkem, who was the principal attorney of an adjacent market-town, and had for some years been the legal adviser to the owner of Napperton Abbey.

As this important "limb of the law" will make his appearance pretty frequently in the course of the present drama, a delineation of his person, and some few particulars of his secret history, may not be considered improper or unacceptable; but we must not so

66

MY OLD COUSIN.

far fail in respect to him, as to give them at the end of a chapter.

CHAPTER HE.

-A man

That hath a mint of phrases in his brain—
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony—
A man of compliments, whom right and wrong
Have chosen as an umpire of their mutiny.

SHAKESPEARE.

Mr. Sharkem rose not in stature to the middle height of men, which was more particularly observable from the extensive circumference of his body; his face was of an amplitude such as might be expected from the dimensions of his person, and only remarkable for width

of mouth and deep-sunk grey eyes, over which the lids had mostly the appearance of being half-shut; hairs, white as snow, but very thinly sown, crowned "the temples of his head," and his gait was of that hobbling description which testified of muscles a little stiffened with the gout.

For his present affluence he was not, like many of his wealthy neighbours, indebted to his ancestors—almost every thing he possessed being the product of his indefatigable industry. His father was a little farmer, oppressed at once by an exorbitant landlord and a numerous family, and incapable of doing any thing more for the latter than educating them at the village school, and apprenticing them, on the easiest terms, to such trades as suited their inclinations.

Our

Our lawyer, at the age of fifteen, was taken into the office of a neighbouring attorney, and in lieu of the fee usual in such cases, was to act in the humble capacity of groom and footboy during one half of the time for which he was articled; but his master soon discovered him to be a lad of too much promise to be employed in such menial services, and consequently advanced him to a desk in his own private office, long before the expiration of one half his clerkship.

The world, with its usual charity where every thing is left to conjecture, attributed this sudden exaltation to certain professional secrets which had accidentally fallen to the knowledge of the young man, and which his principal was bribing him to preserve; nor did these

these suspicions die away when, on Sharkem's admission as an attorney, he was announced as partner in the business of his patron.

In a short time, the death of the senior solicitor threw the whole business into young Sharkem's hands, together with a legacy of five thousand pounds. From this period his fortune rapidly increased: estate after estate fell in to him. from the inability of the mortgagers to pay either principal or interest; much valuable property was purchased by him at a low price, from the fortunate circumstance of having money ready to advance to the needy or extravagant at a short notice; his wife also brought him ten thousand pounds; he succeeded likewise to several lucrative appointments in the town, and connected with

the

the county, where he resided. In a few words, at the season when I have thought proper to introduce him at Napperton Abbey, he was universally esteemed a very rich man, and likely to leave his children (of whom he had three) much more affluently appointed than many a noble lord whose estate extended for miles, and whose pedigree (if you would credit the genealogical tree) could be regularly traced back to the flood.

Age, experience, and profession, had united to endue this great man with such a degree of self-command that it was but very seldom he allowed his countenance to present a faithful index of his feelings; on his pretent entrée into the great hall of Napperton Abbey it did, however, certainly do so, for ne-

ver was amazement more legibly written on human face than it appeared on Sharkem's, when he beheld the companion of the venerable squire.

The long-persevered-in nonintercourse between the St. Pauls of Napperton and their namesakes of Marton, accounted very naturally for the astonishment thus manifested by Mr. Sharkem; and had it been unaccompanied by something which, to Mr. William, betrayed an air of disapprobation, he would not have attended to it particularly. What tended to strengthen his interpretation of the attorney's looks was a recollection that popular opinion ascribed his attentions to the old bachelor squire to mercenary motives—nay, even to a hope of succeeding to the whole of his extensive estates; nor were these apprehensions banished.

banished, though the person who excited them exclaimed—"Well, my dear, worthy, excellent friend, this is as it should be; I am truly, extremely, excessively gratified, rejoiced, and delighted to see it. Mr. William St. Paul, I congratulate you, from my soul congratulate and give you joy."

The clouds exhaling from Mr. St. Paul's tube of best Virginia, not to mention his decaying eyesight, interfered with his ocular observation of the legal gentleman's approach, but his hearing, which was pretty accurate, from the late exclamation, gave him notice of the person who advanced, and also told him that Sharkem regarded Mr. William's reception at Napperton Abbey in the light of declaring him to the world as his heir—a notion which he wished not

to encourage, for, amidst the many excellent traits in the old worthy's character, he had one incorrigible foible, which was, to confine within his own bosom, as long as life remained, the name of the person whom he meant to succeed him at Napperton, or indeed the way in which he designed to dispose of his fine estate there.

At the period when he made up his mind to incorporate into his family one of his young cousins, he had privately considered the circumstance was likely to give rise to a public opinion that the boy adopted must necessarily be designed for his successor, and probably establish a similar hope in the family of St. Paul of Marton; and this he determined to discountenance in two different ways, first by training his *protegé* to some profession,

profession, and then by a private explanation with his cousin William.

The reason for this mental reservation on a subject where suspense was sure to create anxiety in those whose consanguinity made them naturally look forward to the domains of Napperton Abbey, may still (without having recourse to any thing very far fetched) be traced to motives far from dishonourable, nay, on the contrary, fraught with the tenderest humanity: he wished not, as he had repeatedly said to his sisters, to inspire hopes which, in the end, circumstances might induce him to disappoint, and therefore was determined, in his lifetime, never to specifically point out his heir, excepting to the person who should make his will.

That Sharkem knew these to be the

sentiments of Mr. St. Paul, is as certain as that the old gentleman nourished them: this being the case, the speech which the artful man of law seemed to intend as congratulatory to Mr. William, we cannot, I am afraid, ascribe to any very worthy motives, and may be excused, if we presume it designed to elicit from the venerable squire that which might dash from the hand of his relation the cup of hope when nearly at his lips: that it produced something bordering on this strong figure is undeniable, for, in answer to it, Mr. St. Paul said—" I know not whether you will consider my cousin William as a proper object for congratulation, when you hear that I am about to rob him of one of his sone, whom I have prevailed on him to entrust to my care. Observe, however, friend Sharkem," and he seemed by the direction of his eye to wish this part of his speech might be attended to by Mr. William St. Paul—" observe, I do not intend to train the youngster a fine gentleman, but merely educate him for some respectable profession, in which, if he acquit himself to my satisfaction, and I live long enough, I shall assuredly feel it a duty to forward him to the utmost of my power."

"You are so considerate, so good, so kind, so—" perfect, probably the flattering solicitor was about to add, had he not been interrupted by the old gentleman's offering him some punch, with this remark:—" But perhaps you will not venture on it, for I know you have not dined?"

"At any other house," returned the solicitor,

solicitor, "I would certainly refuse; but your punch, my dear, worthy, hospitable friend, is so tempting! so capital! so superexcellent! there is no possibility of resisting it—though, to be sure, I have not dined; we who are in business cannot cat at your rational hours, or certainly, certainly we should adopt them."

"I am told," resumed the old-fashioned squire, "that though your very fine folks have their table covered for what they call dinner at six or seven in the evening, yet, in truth, they eat their heartiest meal at noon, under the new-invented title of lunch; and I am told, too, that some of your most delicate ladies can then apply pretty actively to the 'cold sirloin and the bottled porter, though, at dinner, they would be shock-

ed beyond expression to have so vulgar a thing upon their plate as beef, or a tankard of sound October at their lips."

- "True, specifically, exactly," cried Mr. Sharkem; "the satire is just, is admirable. But all this time I have neglected inquiring after your dear, amiable, inestimable sister. How is the excellent lady, Mr. St. Paul?"
- "Quite as well," returned the squire, "as one can expect, under the united pressure of age, rheumatism, and our late loss."
- "It was indeed a loss—a deplorable privation," resumed Sharkem, with a becoming gravity, and his eyes nearly shut—" we were so afflicted at it! we did so commiscrate you! Mrs. Sharkem has not, I believe, yet ventured on visit-

ing Mrs. Mary St. Paul; but she has many and just apologies and excuses: my gout has required such daily, hourly, nay, I may say unremitting attendance; and then our pet, our little Frances, has been ill; and last, though not by any manner of means least, she was so afraid, so apprehensive of unintentionally renewing your good tender-hearted sister's sorrow by her natural condolements."

The subject was too painful to the old gentleman's feelings for him to allow of its being long dwelt upon; he therefore changed the conversation to what he conjectured (and he was correct) was the real occasion of Mr. Sharkem's present visit.

" Pray, Mr. Sharkem," interrogated he, " are you yet in possession of the terms

terms which the lessees of the Napperton Holme estates propose for the renewal of their expiring term?"

"They sanguinely flatter themselves -they hope, my dear, considerate, worthy friend, that you will not object to renew at the old rent," said the attorney; "and indeed, indeed, good sir, the present times are such—we have, you know and are aware, scarcely recovered from the shock of the American warthat I think it would not answer to ask, or demand, or expect any very considerable advance; and then they are such old, such very old tenants, Mr. St. Paul, and have paid their rents so punctually, so cheerfully!"

"It is far from my intention to oppress," returned the old squire, " but I cannot forget the advantages which my tenants have derived during their long leases, and the different price of lands now and in the year sixty-three: in short, Mr. Sharkem, I expect an advance of ten per cent. on the late rental."

"My dear, good, excellent neighbour and friend," resumed the solicitor, "you are, I fear, exorbitant—you will excuse me, pardon me: you know I am, I ought to be on the side of the poor tenantry—But you are acquainted with my way."

"I shall certainly expect the advance proposed," cried Mr. St. Paul, with a peremptory tone; "lord H——'s and sir F. B——'s tenants pay infinitely higher, I am certain, and we do not hear them utter a single murmur."

"You know the best undoubtedly, assuredly, worthy sir," replied Sharkem,

"far therefore be it from me to dictate or advise. I shall duly and specifically report your ultimatum, and recommend and press compliance with it. The leases, of course, are to be for the term or continuance of twenty-one years, as usual with your family?"

"I have no objection," answered Mr. St. Paul, "though I fear those who succeed me will; but I have the wish to die with the character of a good landlord; at any rate, it will occasion my being regretted, though I held my situation in life well on to a century—perhaps a rather unreasonable portion of time, compared with the general allotment of years."

"Dear Mr. St. Paul;" said the lawyer, "you, of all men living, have least reason to doubt of posthumous respect and reverence: when the world is deprived of you, the loss will be incalculable, irreparable."

Mr. Sharkem now rose to take leave, and we need not doubt that he went off in high good-humour, as he had realized five hundred pounds by his bargain with the squire; for no less a sum had been previously offered to him for a renewal of leases, if procured under an advance of thirty per cent.

At four precisely Mrs. Mary summoned the gentlemen to tea, which she still retained her spinster's privilege of making: it was presented, as the highest of compliments, in the old lady's favourite blue-and-gold dragon china, which essuredly, in the present rage for antiques

tiques of that description, would have been considered vastly cheap at five* guineas the cup and saucer.

At five o'clock, the horse which was to convey Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul to Marton was, according to their order, at the gate.

The parting scene between Matt and mamma fell infinitely short in the pathetic to what might have been reasonably expected on a first separation, the secret cause for which may perhaps be traced to a private lecture which master Mathew received from his papa, in which he failed not to remind him that he was far too big a boy, too much of a man, to think of crying after mamma. Mamma also was restrained by what she observed.

^{*} This price was actually officed at Scarborough for deepon china.

served, during her short visit at the Abbey, of the characters of the truly venerable Mr. St. Paul and his sister.

Tacitumity prevailed until they had ridden for the space of five minutes from the walnut avenue, when Mrs. William remarked—" Matt, I think, when he becomes accustomed to the change, will be very comfortable."

"He may be," replied her husband, "if his 'stiffness in opinion' do not interfere with any of our worthy, though certainly eccentric 'old cousin's' long-cherished prejudices."

CHAPTER · IV.

When nurs'd with skill, what tempting fruits appear? E'en now, sagacious foresight points to shew
A little bench of heedless bishops here,
And there a chancellar in embryo.

SHENSTONE.

About half-an-hour after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul from the Abbey, Kester introduced an elderly personage, whose exterior would have appeared singular to eyes far more experienced than those of Matt; his name was Sympson, though he was mostly designated, by the privileged squire

of Napperton, "Old Six-and-eight-pence."

" This gentleman and you, sir Mathew," said Mr. St. Paul, " must be better acquainted; in a few words, you will henceforth appear in this family in the characters of pupil and tutor.— Sympson," continued he, "I delegate to you the charge of reading ' Coke upon Littleton,' &c. &c. all which will be found in the sixth press of the library, with this youth. Master Mathew, you I recommend, by a guardian's privilege, to listen to this your preceptor with reverence, and consider him (as indeed he is) duly qualified to instruct you in the profession you are doomed to follow."

Sympson took a copious pinch of snuff, and bowed assent. Poor Mathew

said nothing; but I suppose his silence was interpreted favourably, as Mr St. Paul, waving his hand to Kester, who stood in the back-ground with a backgammon-board, desired him to approach.

In a few minutes our venerable friend and his visitor had their men arranged in battle array, and began rattling the dice.

- " Aces!" exclaimed Sympson.
- "Six and ace!" returned his antagonist; so the game commenced: whilst it is continuing, we will enter into a few particulars of Sympson's history, and give a rough delineation of his person, which probably may not be uninteresting to my readers, who will doubtless wish to receive all possible information respecting the man from whom old

Mr. St. Paul intend. Matt to derive the rudiments of his legal information.

James Sympson was the son of a country gentleman of small landed property, who resided in a village adjacent to Napperton, and had always been on a very intimate footing with the St. 'Paul family. At the age of sixteen or seventeen he was placed in an eminent attorney's office, and studied so successfully, that at twenty-one he had laid in a very unusual stock of professional information. After creditably going through the proper forms of admission in London, he returned to his native village, and never surely had young man a better prospect of success.

But poor Sympson, reader, had a fault—who is there among us that can lay

his hand upon his heart and say he has not?—his fault, too, alas! was of such a nature, that notwithstanding the best of introductions, "troops of friends," extensive information, unquestionable probity, general esteem, his office, within "one little year" from the commencement of his practice, was the least frequented of any solicitor's in the county: in fact, he was terribly addicted to the bottle, and whenever an opportunity offered, inebriated himself to a most shocking degree.

In vain his relatives and friends remonstrated—in vain they foretold the blight which must mildew his fair prospects; he promised well, but, alas! performed not—his propensity was too strong to be extinguished.

Beggary stared him in the face, and

ne would indeed have been completely ruined, had it not been for the benevolent interference of Mr. St. Paul and some of the ancient friends of his family. At Napperton Abbey, in particular, he was invariably received with friendly cordiality—there he always acquitted himself well; in truth, the venerable squire would not allow him to do otherwise, for his potion of liquor, whether ale, wine, or punch, was always meted out, and on no account was he allowed to exceed it.

Backgammon was a favourite amusement with old Mr. St. Paul, and as Sympson also played it, he went for that express purpose three or four times in the course of each week. He was about twenty years junior to his patron, and his countenance, even at an advanced

vanced age, was extraordinarily prepossessing; it presented, in profile, a strong resemblance to his most gracious majesty king George the Third, and could not have failed making an invariably favourable impression, had it not been mostly besmeared with an intolerable quantity of Scotch snuff; such indeed was his passion for that "titillating dust," that, not satisfied with the largest box, he had a waistcoat-pocket lined with tin properly fitted up for its reception: his pinches, too, differed as much in quantity as they did in frequency from those of his rivals in this delicate method of consuming tobacco, for, generally speaking, he extravagantly regaled his nose with half a handful at a. time.

It may be guessed how this liberality would

would bronze his face; but I defy the most fertile imagination to conceive the state of his wardrobe, which, if it had been scraped, would have furnished halfa-dozen* moderate-sized snuff-boxes; and yet, after all, his clothes were not sufficiently masked by this facing, to prevent the most transient observer from perceiving they had been shaped by Mr. St. Paul's operator in cloth; indeed, to let you into a secret, they had been really worn by the old squire, as Sympson invariably succeeded to his east Sunday suits when they were about a year's standing.

But we must dwell no longer on this original+, the backgammon must close, for Kester summons to the hall—the cold

^{*} Spoken metaphorically, of course.

[†] The author well remembers him.

cold beef and roasted potatoes are waiting.

As Matt was yet considered in the light of a stranger, for this one evening he must be indulged with eating his apple-tart and new milk along with his old cousins and their guest. At this he was on all accounts highly delighted, and on none more than because he sanguinely interpreted it into a proof that he should not retire earlier than the rest of the family; and as he was to sleep in a light closet adjoining to Mr. St. Paul's lodging-room, would consequently have a neighbour when he took possession of his new apartment: this neighbour I suppose Matt considered as a spell against the "elves and fairies" of the place; for whatever bravery the little hero had shewn when his sisters mentioned

tioned the Abbey ghosts, he had yet too much nursery legend floating on his brain to have the smallest doubt of their existence.

Poor Matt's conjectures and hopes, alas! proved erroneous, for the house-keeper, Mrs. Mary Johnson, was called to attend him to his *petite loge* a very short time after he had finished his repast.

The matron was not very well calculated to appease his childish fears, for she firmly believed that nuns without heads, bald-pated friars, and many equally terrific appearances, kept their vigils pretty frequently within the walls of the Abbey, and attributed every creak of the ancient wainscot, every motion of the old tapestry or the crazy casements, to some supernatural agency.

Luckily

Luckily no explanation took place between the credulous old lady and her juvenile charge; probably the latter thought himself too much a man to acknowledge his apprehensions, and Mary was too humane to run the risk of terrifying the poor child unnecessarily.

With the last ray which fell on the eyes of Mathew from the retreating housekeeper's candle, departed all the poor fellow's resolution—he trembled most exceedingly, covered himself entirely with the bedclothes, and had not pride come to his relief, would have certainly called the old woman back. His agitations were not, however, of a long duration—the drowsy god soon routed them, and lulked him to that sweet repose which ever lights upon the lids of innocence.

" Bon soir, dear boy!" I cannot forbear exclaiming.

After Matt had retired from the hall. and whilst Sympson was quaffing his apportioned quantum of punch, the venerable squire opened to his companion his views and designs respecting the recently-imported member of his family. Six-and-eightpence, as may be supposed (for he possessed a truly grateful heart), was ready to declare that every exertion should be used to sow the seeds of sound law in the mind of his proposed pupil. This, though highly acceptable, did not give Mr. St. Paul half the gratification he received from his visitor's unsolicited declaration, that Matt was the exact image of the picture " in green," in the "low parlour."

" Do you think so? do you think

so?" exclaimed the squire. "Egad, Sympson, I believe you are right. Yes, yes—Mathew has certainly somewhat of the same cast of features. To-morrow, when you conclude your initiatory lecture, you shall compare him with my portrait—ay, and you shall see him attired in the same costume."

Sympson looked incredulous, for he knew not of the favourite suit's existence, and he did not suppose a fac simile to it, from the village tailor, could be so rapidly completed; but he expressed not his opinion, and, according to his usual practice when doubtful what answer to return, had recourse to his already-commemorated snuff-pocket.

Mr. St. Paul smoked one solitary pipe after Sympson quitted him, and during

its

its continuance mentally soliloquized much to the following effect:—

" Matt certainly resembles our family: if I find the likeness still more remarkable when he is dressed for comparison to-morrow in my antique green-andgold habit, I shall be breaking through my resolution by nominating him my successor here. But, hang it! that will not do either: poor boy! it might be his ultimate ruin: for I have observed through life, that not one of your assured expectants in a thousand turns out well—they scarcely ever apply to those studies which might properly fit them for their station in life; their constant prayer is for the death of those who detain their inheritance from them, and when the tiresome old dog is off, they

they cannot content themselves with dancing over his grave, but curse him for having made such a late retreat.— Matt shall not know my present disposition in his favour—he shall study the law, and I prognosticate he will rise in the profession; at any rate, his legal information will qualify him admirably for the commission of the peace; and no character in the world can be more useful than a well-informed country justice."

With such contemplations working in his mind he lay down upon his pillow, and they produced, as might naturally be expected, visions in which little Matt performed a principal part—he saw the armorial bearings of the St. Pauls waving over the woolsack of a lord-high-chancellor of England; no wonder he arose from his bed more de-

102 · MY OLD COUSIN.

termined than ever that the profession which Mathew's name had suggested should be that in which he must positively be initiated.

CHAPTER V.

It was, I weene, a comely sight To see sae trim a boy.

OLD BALLAD.

-Alas! to make me A fixed figure, for the hand of Scorn To point his slow unmoving finger at!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE visions which appeared to Matt's imagination were not by any means of that terrific nature which might have been expected, when we recollect the state of mind in which he went to sleep: the idea of the pony which he flattered himself his old cousin would allow him, put to flight the whole host of ghosts and goblins; on this delightful hobby-horse he conceived himself mounted—on it he was indulging his baby-brother with a ride—on it he beheld himself journeying to Marton, the object of universal envy.

By seven in the morning he awoke, and in a moment bounded from his bed, and with the ardent curiosity inseparable from his years, immediately unclosed the leaded casement to survey the prospect.

As if to insure the continuance of that happy flow of spirits in which he had opened his eyes, it was not one of those dismal hazy mornings which too frequently forerun November's drear approach; on the contrary, the sun was tising

tising amidst an almost cloudless sky, and gilded the half-leafless trees, the sombre evergreens, and a generally gloomy-looking water which flowed under arches through the Abbey, with a brilliance rarely observable in the latter days of autumn.

A robin carolled his soft harmonious lay from a distant buttress; its little voice was certainly an evidence that summer had gone by, but at the same time the distance whence the song was heard cheered the mind with an assurance that winter was not yet near enough to necessitate the sweet warbler to chirp for his daily meal at the open windows of our dwellings.

There is something in scenes like this which rivets the attention of many of all ages, who would pass unheeding by

a gayer prospect; even Mathew, young as he was, surveyed it with such fixed attention, that he perceived not Mr. St. Paul's entrance into his apartment until he touched him on the shoulder.

He was soon equipped for descending to Mrs. Mary's parlour, where they breakfasted. The meal was obviously hurried over by the old gentleman, which being contrary to his general custom, I can only ascribe to his eagerness for introducing Matt into the library, or his anxiety to behold him arrayed in the green-and-gold suit which Kester Hilton had on the preceding night received positive orders to have well aired against the morning: both these impor-. tant points were accomplished within a quarter of an hour from the conclusion of the morning repast.

- The clothes, even to the laced hat. fitted to admiration: the old squire was so delighted with the child's appearance, and, more than all, with the striking likeness he now bore to his own portrait, that, according to his former apprehension, it was with difficulty he repressed expressions respecting his intended heir. which would have been highly favourable to Mathew's chance of succession: he was probably prevented by hearing the housekeeper talking to Sympson whilst she was conducting him up stairs.
- " Six-and-eightpence never pleased me better, in the whole course of our long acquaintance," said the squire to his humble friend Kester Hilton, "than by this early attendance, this obvious readiness to enter on his new charge. Tell Mary Johnson he dines with us to-day;

to-day; and take care, Kester, that his tankard foams with the best stuff in your cellar, and make some little addition to our accustomed allowance of punch."

Matt had barely time to inquire the reason for the appellation of "Six-and-eightpence," and hear it was bestowed by Mr. St. Paul, in allusion to a fee of that amount which, in his day, was not considered below the notice of the law gentry, before the bearer of the title entered. He could not restrain a smile, as he glanced his eye over Mathew in his extraordinary habit.

Instead of smiling, I fancy, reader, you or I should have burst into an involuntary fit of laughter: whether we should have been justified in this breach of good manners, I appeal to Hogarth's celebrated

celebrated print of "Evening," where the little fellow, who is receiving chastisement from a vixen sister, presents an exact counterpart (with the exception of the cockade) of Mathew St. Paul in the costume of his old cousin's youth.

As it never once entered into the head of Mr. St. Paul that his idolized green-and-gold suit could be regarded by any one in a ridiculous light, Sympson's smile was laid to the score of admiration; and this was decidedly proved, when the last-mentioned gentleman judiciously exclaimed—"Ah! my friend Christopher St. Paul grown young again? or has his picture become animated, and stepped down from the family-party?"

The display of Matt in his new clothes to Mrs. Mary and the other members of the

the Abbey family, seriously interfered with, though it did not altogether prevent, the young student's introduction to the library; little more indeed was done than a display of its ponderous folio volumes: this little, however, convinced Mr. Sympson, and raised a suspicion in the bosom of the old squire, that Mathew had not yet reached an age when even the rudiments of so intricate a study as jurisprudence could be sown in his mind with any thing like a certainty of their taking root. Mathew, as might be expected from his tender years, was in reality far more interested in his "green-and-gold" attire, than with sir Mathew Hale's likeness, or the numerous pages that succeeded it in his valuable works: he had yet, poor inexperienced boy! to learn the ridicule attached

teched to any striking deviation from the modes of the day—yet to contend against the laugh of his former schoolfellows and contemporaries.

Sympson attended on the following day, but made little more progress with his juvenile pupil than he had done on that preceding it; the sight of the tremendous volumes he produced caused a heartache in Matt, which nothing his tutor could advance seemed able to alleviate.

"Dear sir," exclaimed the boy, in the simplicity of his heart, "it is quite impossible, in all my life, to get through these monstrous books. Ovid, nay, the Greek Testament, where I had to turn over my lexicon for every word, was not half so frightful—they would have had

had an end, but these, these never, never can."

The law preceptor came—Mat was closeted with him day after day during the succeeding week, but not a page could they get through with attention: 'the moment Sympson turned his head another way, the careless pupil was going back to the copperplate frontispiece of the work before him; even the " green-and-gold" habiliments which he was sentenced to wear until a new suit of black, in the same form, should be completed at the tailor's, by degrees lost their charms, and Matt secretly pined for home, and wished himself again in company with his playmates at Marton.

Sunday completed the poor lad's disgust with the regulations of Napperton, for on that day, dressed in his gay apparel, he was ordered to appear at divine service in the parish church. The congregation were generally pretty early in their attendance; Matt did not arrive until they were mostly seated.

Picture to yourself, reader, a child of ten years old, clad in the extraordinary fashion of the early part of the last century: his coat was buttoned with jet from the neck to the skirt; the laps expanded from his hips, as if upborne by a hoop; the sleeves were so large as to exhibit his shirt nearly to the elbow: his fringed and embroidered cravat was exactly similar to that in which we have already introduced the old squire; his breeches reached not to his knees: square-toed and high-heeled shoes, with brilliant buckles, ornamented his feet, and and under his arm he carried a triangular cocked hat. Imagine this outré figure proceeding through the middle aisle of a country church, followed by a grey-headed servant in dress almost as preposterous, and you will readily credit me, when I assure you that not a countenance beheld them without exhibiting a grin; even the parson, who had already mounted the desk, was obliged to have recourse to the sleeve of his surplice and a convenient "hem!" to conceal his risibility.

Mathew fancied (his age and inexperience will excuse him) that he could be nothing but the object of admiration; many others every day, who are *voluntarily* far more ridiculously accountered, deceive themselves in a similar way: look in the Bond-street of London, the

Milsom-street of Bath, the Steyne of Brighton, and you will find examples ad infinitum.

Matt's agreeable delusion continued until the loud laugh and boisterous vociferation of a crowd of boys whom he passed in the Churchyard made him suspect that there must be something extraordinary, if not absurd, in his appearance: this was decidedly proved by the exclamations of a considerable party, who pursued him more than half way home. Amidst the confusion of tongues a few truly provoking sentences occasionally reached his ears:—

- "Lord, what a comical old-fashioned chap!" cried one—" it must be Mr. Punch, as acted at B——— fair."
 - " I lay twopence," bawled another,
 "it's

"it's the little count as dad saw at York races."

"Nay, marry," said a third, "it's none else but maister Matt St. Paul. Why I would not be made sike a seet on for all the old squire's money."

"What fine fun we should have with him," observed another, "if he was to come to school in this tom-taw-dry pickle! We would soon pick his feathers for him—ha! ha! ha!"

In the last speaker poor Matt recognized a schoolfellow, with whom he had been particularly intimate.

It was in vain that Kester used every effort to restore silence and disperse the throng; his endeavours only excited new merriment and increased the noise.—

Matt's mind was quite in a ferment; he longed

longed most heartily to turn round and give some of the ringleaders a sound drubbing; but then there were so many, and such a number of big fellows!—Luckily it was the village dinner-hour, which checked the progress of his tormentors, or most likely they would have followed him even to the gates of the Abbey.

"Oh, Kester!" cried he, and he could no longer repress his tears, "I cannot bear this—I will never put on these frightful clothes again. Do, do beg and beseech my good old cousin to let me be dressed like other boys."

Kester was sufficiently attached to the "young squire" (as he was already christened in the kitchen) to have undertaken his cause, could he have done so with any probability of success; but, from from a long experience of his venerable master's pertinacity on certain favourité points, he was aware that interference would, in the present instance, be unavailing; all he could do was to endeavour to reconcile the mortified boy to his singular clothing, by suggesting it was merely the novelty of his dress which excited notice, and that, in a Sunday or two, he would pass along uninterrupted.

Mathew was so far from believing this, that he privately meditated a precipitate retreat to Marton, at the hazard of his father's displeasure, in preference to being exhibited again in Napperton church.

" Papa and mamma," thought the little reasoner, "will be glad enough to see me in their hearts, I know, whatever they

they may say at first; and William, and George, and they all, will be quite delighted—and then I shall escape these great ugly books."

He was almost decided, but he resolved first, as Kester seemed to decline it, to state his grievances to Mr. St. Paul, and petition for redress.

The old gentleman met him in the garden-court, and did not require words to inform him that his *protegé* had met with some disagreeable occurrence—Matt's ingenuous countenance displayed mortification in most legible characters.

Explanation ensued. The squire pronounced Mathew to be a weak boy, for attending to what he considered the result of envy at seeing him dressed as a gentleman's son ought to be. Matt boldly declared he would not go through what

what he had done in returning from church that morning for the world.— Dinner put a partial stop to the dispute.

At the usual time came old Sympson to smoke his Sunday-evening pipe at the Abbey: the offended squire was ready with his complaints against poor Matt; Six-and-eightpence charitably pleaded the boy's extreme youth, and observed that he did not wonder at his bad taste in dress, when he called to mind he had not discernment enough to appreciate the delights arising from such an *imposing* study as the law.

It was finally settled that time would reconcile the young gentleman to his clothing and his *entertaining* studies, and that the way to hasten this longed-for period was to accustom him, by daily use, to the former, and to smooth the

passage

passage to the other by confining their present "reading's" to the lives of the most celebrated civilians, which, whilst it afforded amusement, would most probably inspire the youthful tyro with a desire of devoting himself to a profession by which so many have been elevated to the very pinnacle of human greatness.

Matt was privately confident that time would not have any of this wonderful influence, but he had the policy to keep this opinion to himself.

On Monday morning he rose from his bed before seven o'clock, and manfully resolved not to resume the obnoxious suit: he had observed the wardrobe where Mary Johnson deposited the things he wore on arriving at Napperton, and in those, let what would pook the consequence, he determined to array

himself. He tried the doors of the press—they opened, but, alas! not an article of his late raiment appeared: it would have been miraculous if any of it had been found there, for, by order of the benevolent squire, the whole had been presented to an indigent family in the village, the very day after Matt's assumption of his old cousin's green coat. Thus, contrary to his resolves, the unfortunate boy was compelled once more to dress himself as gentlemens' sons appeared fourscore years ago.

I cannot say much for the radiant smiles which illumined his countenance at breakfast; he had yet to attain the worldly art of wearing the sign of contentment written on his brow, whilst his heart swelled almost to bursting with directly contrary feelings. This gloom gloom was not unobserved, though it passed unreproved, for Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary regarded it as nothing more than a cloud which might be naturally enough expected to arise, and would as naturally pass away, and be seen no more.

Matt, it appears, had more decision about him than the old lady and gentleman calculated upon, for, at the time when Sympson expected his attendance in the library, he was sneaking along, by the most unfrequented road, to Marton.

CHAPTER VI.

----There's one

Has plac'd himself upon your sacred hearth, Beneath the dread protection of your lares, And sits mysteriously in solemn silence.

THOMSON.

It happened on the morning of the lately-recorded memorable "hegira" from Napperton Abbey, that Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul were conversing on the subject of their absent child, and congratulating themselves that they heard nothing contradictory to his ready domestication in the family of their old cousin. "Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. William, who had accidentally turned her eyes to a window commanding a view of the high road—" Bless me! what oddity have we got here?"

Mr. William looked in the same direction with his wife, but, owing to anintervening hedge, was too late to discern more of the attractive figure approaching than his cocked hat.

"He must be a dwarfish gentleman," observed he, " or you low quickwood could not hide so much of him. But he will emerge from the shade soon, for he is fast advancing to the sunk fence at the bottom of the garden, and must pass it, if he be journeying to the village."

He was not "journeying to the village," nor did he "pass the sunk fence:"

he opened the garden gate, and presented the well-known but dejected counternance of their son Mathew.

Mr. William arose with an air which threatened no very agreeable reception to the wayfaring boy, for, on seeing him unattended, he concluded he returned in disgrace, and had probably taken a French leave of the inhabitants of Napperton Abbey, and by so doing must have irreconcilably offended old Mr. St. Paul.

"I enter into your fears, my love," said Mrs. William, placing her hand gently on her husband's arm, "and conclude with you, that the poor fellow has either offended or been offended."

" Been offended! Mrs. William," cried papa—" it seems then that my parting injunctions made but a very slight

slight impression, for I charged him, at the risk of my overlasting displeasure, • not to be offended, but, on the contrary, to pay undeviating obedience to every wish and command of our old consin."

"Remember," resumed mamma, with a supplicating look, "the 'stiffness of opinion' from which we anticipated an interference with Matt's settlement at the Abbey; remember, too, his youth and inexperience may have magnified some trifle into a serious grievance; he may yet be reinstated in the old gentleman's good graces—you must be the mediator, William, dear William."

"Our good cousin's 'stiffness in opinion' will, I fear, render any thing I can do ineffectual," said Mr. St. Paul.

"Far from attempting to mediate, I

scarcely know how to venture on visiting the Abbey without special invitation; I set it down, Margaret, for certain, that we have lost all chance of Mr. St. Paul's favour—all my sanguine hopes are dashed to the ground, 'like water that cannot be gathered up again."

They every moment expected to see the delinquent open the door: he came not: this was confirmation strong of something being wrong.

Mr. William, anxious to know the worst, proceeded instantly to an apartment detached from the house, and designated the "school-room;" there he found Matt in his masquerade habit, seeking the protection of his paternal "lares,"—Anglice, hovering over the dying embers of a fire, "all melancholy musing." He obviously shrunk from observation:

observation; whatever he thought himself, he seemed conscious of appearing a culprit in the eyes of his father.

"Well, sir," said Mr. William St. Paul, "and to what cause am I to attribute your appearance here?"

Not without a faltering articulation, though with a firmness seldom met with in a childish offender, he ingenuously and without reserve commenced a narrative of the trials he had gone through -" I could not, papa," added he, " I really could not bear to be so laughed at; and then I am quite sure I never could have got through all the monstrous books which Mr. St. Paul wished me to read. I tried and tried, but could not understand them; and you know, papa, it would have been very naughty

in me to pretend I read them, when I really could not."

When Mr. William looked upon his little boy's extraordinary dress, he could not but regard it very likely to render him ridiculous; he then called to mind what would have been his own feelings in similar circumstances, and at a similar age: thus thinking, he mentally pardoned the little criminal, but he thought it not right to make a visible display of mercy's " ivory sceptre" immediately; on the contrary, he assumed an austerity of air, and said-" You are truly, as your old cousin named you, a very weak boy to act as you have done, and, for such an insignificant cause, offend so kind a friend as worthy Mr. St. Paul; you must therefore accompany me back

to him, and by future obedience endeavour to atone for the past."

"Oh, papa! papa!" cried Mathew, "pray do not ask this of me—I cannot be happy at the Abbey. Let Will or George go; perhaps they may like it better than I have done."

"At any rate," thought Mr. William, "I must go to Napperton, and without delay, otherwise I never can expect reconciliation with 'my old cousin."

Whilst he was thus determining on a visit to the Abbey, a servant announced the arrival of Kester Hilton. Mr. William hastened down to receive him, almost as eagerly as he would have done to his aged master.

Kester was delighted to find the child safe at Marton.—" He has put us into a strange fuss at the Abbey, I assure you, master William," said the old domestic; "we have been dragging the ponds and ferreting into every hole and corner to seek him."

"I shall take the ungrateful boy back without delay," said Mr. William.

"That will be quite useless, sir," returned Kester, "for I know master so well, that I dare venture to swear he will never have him again."

"I shall go, however, friend Kester," exclaimed the disappointed father; "and if you think your master will not be displeased with your staying here till my return, I will thank you to do so; for, if he should agree to Matt's return, you can reconduct him to the Abbey very easily."

"To stay here till you come back I will readily venture," said Hilton; "but depend

depend upon it, sir, I shall receive no orders for taking master Mathew home with me to the Abbey; master abominates runaways, and never was known to pardon one in the whole course of his life. I do firmly believe that if old Cerby the housedog was to take off for a night, and he's a prime favourite, he would be hanged for his pains in the morning."

In a few minutes Mr. William was on horseback, and galloping on the road to his old cousin's residence.

"I know, from your countenance," said squire St. Paul, "that the child is safe, and I am right truly glad of it, for he has given me more uneasiness in two hours than I ever felt throughout my long life; but no matter—it's over, and I hope I shall be no worse for it. What a foolish

a foolish lad he was, to act as he has done! Had he but uttered one syllable significant of a wish to return to you, I would have sent him off the next minute; I never keep a creature in my house against their inclination."

Mr. William said every thing of an apologetic nature which might be expected from a parent situated like himself, and ended with observing that he would bring the young truant back again, and answer for his future good conduct.

The squire would not hear a word of such an arrangement—" No, no," said he, "I am not a friend to compulsion—volunteers are my favourites; besides, I have long determined never to readmit a deserter into my corps. But however, cousin William, to shew that I do not blame

blame or am offended at you in this disagreeable business, I am ready to make trial of another of your boys. What say you to trusting me with your youngest? perhaps I may find him more to my purpose than sir Mathew. As to my visions of woolsacks and lord-high-chancellors, they must float away after the manner of all other air-built castles. Rodney, I think you call him, will be wax more likely to receive my impressions than could be expected from a boy of ten years old."

Mr. William expressed extreme readiness to comply with what he considered his old cousin's kind and generous proposal, and determined, however trying it must prove, to give up his pet, rather than lose all chance of his family succeeding to the demesne of Napperton.

- You know me to be a sanguine impatient old fellow," said the ancient squire, "therefore, I need scarcely say, the sooner you send the little gentleman the better."
- "Kester can bring him, if you please, sir," cried Mr. William, "for he will remain at Marton till my return thither."

It was agreed, *nem. con.* and very soon after away rode our anxious father.

Mrs. William St. Paul had been so hurried with the events of the day, that she had scarce time to reflect upon the sacrifice required of her, before she beheld her little darling mounted before old Kester, on Mr. St. Paul's black horse, Sampson.

Mr. William had hurried over the affair of Rodney's departure, under pretence of obliging Mr. St. Paul, but in reality

reality in order to spare his beloved wife from the generally lengthened tortures of separation.

CHAPTER VII.

Won by their care, the lovely child-Soon on his new protectors smald, With dimpled cheek and eye so fair, Through his thick curls of flaxen bair.

WALTIR SCOTT.

RODNEY, buoyant with a childish love of change, evinced not the smallest symptom of chagrin at his proposed removal from Marton; on the contrary, he was all impatience to see the horse at the gate, on which he was to ride before old Kester to Napperton Abbey.

The introduction of our young traveller

veller at the house of the squire shall not, reader, rest assured, be so tediously detailed as was that of his brother Mathew: we have not now to introduce you pro formâ to "my old cousin" or Mrs. Mary St. Paul, or to eleerone you through the curious apartments of their dwelling; with these we consider you perfectly at home: suffice it then to say, that Mr. St. Paul cordially shook hands with his new inmate, praised his appearance extremely, called him his little " white-headed boy," at the same time stroking his brows, which were liberally covered with waving ringlets of the lightest flaxen. In addition to these testimonies of approbation, he declared that, however like Matt had been considered to the often-quoted picture in "green-and-gold," Rodney's countenance presented

presented a much more faithful resemblance of it. Mrs. Mary, too, was particularly gracious, and opened her corner cupboard with unusual alacrity, to present the interesting stranger with a retaining fee in the shape of home-made gingerbread and preserves.

Rodney looked as he felt, honest fellow, highly gratified, and did not appear in the least alarmed when Mr. St. Paul addressed him as "the young admiral."

"You were baptized, no doubt," said he, "in compliment to our gallant admiral Rodney, and it shall be your own fault if you do not, in due time, cull similar laurels. Will you be a sailor, my dear little fellow?" interrogated he.

"Oh, yes—indeed I will," exclaimed the child, with unaffected naïveté—" I should like it vastly; I saw such pretty ships

ships at Scarborough, and longed to be in them so, sir, you can't think!—Yes, sir, I will be a sailor—I am sure I will."

Rodney had been with his father's family at Scarborough in the course of the preceding summer, and had beheld the vast ocean gilded with reflexions from an almost cloudless sky, unruffled by the stormy blast; he had gazed on myriads of vessels, with their silverywhite canvas swelled by gentle gales, passing and repassing, and he dreamt not of the dangers of the great deep, its direful tempests, its rocks, its quicksands. Who, but for these tremendous perils, would not plough the ocean, and visit all the nations of the earth?

With the arrival of Rodney at Napperton Abbey vanished Mr. St. Paul's romantic anticipations of a lord-high-chancellor cellor of England arising from the scions of his family-tree; but in their place, I cannot deny, sprung hopes almost as airy—the squire now assured himself that an admiral of the blue or the white was submitted to his training hand.

When the child had retired to sleep, Mrs. Mary ventured on remarking—"If, brother, you should hereafter think fit to make this boy your successor here, it were a pity he should be brought up to the sea."

"He will be ready enough to resign so precarious a profession, Mary, for the secure harbour of Napperton Abbey, depend upon it; so don't trouble yourself about my present destination of him," returned "my old cousin," and they parted for the night.

Sympson called in the morning, not with

with an idea of instructing his quondam pupil, for he was aware of his flight, but from a laudable desire of assuaging the irritation of his disappointed patron's feelings: he was, in heart and soul, the warm friend of Mr. William, and, could he have influenced the ancient proprietor of Napperton Abbey, would have secured its inheritance to the St. Pauls of Marton. He was truly happy at finding Matt's vacated seat occupied by his brother Rodney, and by no means sorry to hear (though it would lose him many excellent dinners) that his lawpreceptorship had terminated; in reality, from the juvenility of his pupil, he had always regarded it as a herculean labour, which, after all his exertions, could not be performed.

The pause during the afternoon-pipe

of old Mr. St. Paul, allowed time for a consultation with his friend Six-andeightpence as to the most likely way of inspiring little Rodney with a desire of preparing himself for his intended profession.

Sympson, much to the satisfaction of the sanguine squire, very opportunely recollected a superannuated lieutenant of the royal navy, who resided in a neighbouring market town, and, according to his report, appeared particularly competent to improve the young gentleman's taste for nautical pursuits, being most enthusiastically devoted to the sca service, though he had gained nothing more by it than a pittance of a pension and a wooden leg. His name was Hatchway, possibly a relation of the amusing tar immortalized by Dr. Smollet: be

that

that as it may, I can only remark, that for good qualities of the heart, and loyalty to his king and country, not a Hatchway in the world could surpass him. He was soon after introduced at the Abbey, and from the readiness with which he entered into the squire's views respecting master Rodney's education, in a very short time was enrolled among the old gentleman's principal favourites.

The plan with which he commenced his operations was certainly well calculated to insure eventual success: Rodney had already an earnest desire for more intimate acquaintance with the "pretty ships" he had beheld off Scarborough; Hatchway produced petites specimens of them, from the first-rate man of war to the most insignificant sloop; of these he pointed out the vot. I.

different parts and their specific uses not a sail or rope but was repeatedly dwelt upon and named. The amusement which the child received from these exhibitions and conversations insured his attention to the ardent lecturer, and implanted deeply in the pupil's mind a fixed determination to behold these objects at full length, which thus delighted him in miniature.

From ships they proceeded to the adventures of men who, by means of them, had in former days performed voyages which appeared miraculous, and visited countries which were then only believed to exist in the heated imaginations of the credulous and visionary.

Rodney was naturally of a romantic and enterprising spirit, so these lessons, far from appearing irksome, were a

means

means of reconciling him completely to the Abbey and its peculiar regulations, and effectually attracted his attention from the antique costume which, like his brother Matt, he was compelled to assume. Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul were of course beyond measure gratified with the report of their little Rodney's happiness, which he failed not to give in whenever they saw him,

The profession for which he was intended at the first was far from an agreeable contemplation to them, for there are few fathers and mothers, particularly inland people, who can think of trusting a favourite son to the multiform dangers and uncertainties of the capricious ocean, without an involuntary shudder—a shudder, too, which does not easily subside.

In the present instance, Mr. William very judiciously appeased the natural anxiety of his wife, by pointing out the indispensable necessity there was for humouring the old gentleman with the entire guidance and direction of their little boy, if they ever expected him or any of his brothers to succeed to Napperton.-" From the advanced age," added he, " of 'my old cousin,' it is not very likely he should survive the accomplishment of his projects respecting Rodney, and in that case, if the little follow should prove the heir, it is not probable he will feel inclined to quit the secure enjoyments of so fine an estate for the precarious existence of a sailor"

Soothed by these and similar arguments, Mrs. William became perfectly reconciled

reconciled to the situation of her youngest child, and could hear of, nay, converse respecting the nautical lessons which occupied all his time and attention, without feeling any particular anxiety.

Neither could Mr. Sharkem be enumerated among the malcontents (if any such existed) on Rodney's establishment at Napperton; to be candid, he was abundantly pleased with Mathew's substitute. Matt had been designed for his own knowing profession, and probably, in a few years, under the tutelage of Sympson, whose legal information he knew to be highly respectable, would have become a dangerous observer of certain views which we may perhaps not inaptly entitle anticipative contemplations respecting the future inheritance of Napperton estates; Rodney, on the other hand, was destined to a calling which must necessarily draw him, at a very earry age, almost entirely from the cociety of his friends in England.

After these hints, the reader will not cospect the prosperous attorney of insincerity, when he is informed that his first exchanation to Mr. St. Paul after Matt's departure was highly complimentary to the embryo admiral.

"My dear, worthy, and most excellent friend," said he, "I congratulate and give you joy, much and truly, on the arrival and appearance of this juvenile stranger: his countenance has sufficient of a St. Paul stamped and written legibly upon it to insure his worth and your generous patronage; there is something at the same time about him which evidences. evidences, testifies, and bears witness, according to my poor trifling skill in the art or science of physiognomy, that he possesses a fearless intrepidity of character, peculiarly, entirely adapted to the profession which, with your usual, nay, unfailing discernment, you have recommended. He will, he must, my worthy, invaluable friend and neighbour, rise to the very summit, the very apex of naval glory."

The honey dew of flattery is so palatable, that it may be administered in wonderfully large doses without cloying the stomach, otherwise the last recorded speech would have disgusted instead of gratified our old friend the squire. I would not have it inferred from this opinion that Mr. St. Paul (though ninety) was more easily gulled than the

generality of his neighbours. Consider, reader, all-sapient as you doubtless are, how readily you present an open ear to the sensible voice of that charmer who appears similarly opinioned with yourself on any darling, point; though he speak in rather figurative language, you consider him as nothing inferior to "a second Daniel."

In the case before us, the experienced Sharkem prophesied events which his friend hoped for, perhaps prayed for; how then could he avoid listening, listening with delight, to such flattering vaticinations, and believing they would in due time be accomplished in every particular?

As a confirmation that his predilection for the sea service was deeply sown, Rodney entered with all possible energy upon

upon his new studies, and listened hour after hour, with unwearied attention, to the harangues of Mr. Hatchway, who, like other veteran tars, was never tired of fighting " his battles o'er again." He sailed under Vernon in 1739, and few important engagements took place, from that period until the defeat of count de Grasse by admiral Rodney, in which he had not borne a part. At first his discourses were rather too much larded with technical phraseology to be clearly comprehended; this soon, however, ceased to be the case, for in a very few months, such was the little St. Paul's unremitting attention, he became equally familiar with the sea terms as with every part of the seventy-four which was moored for his instruction and annucement in the fish-pond.

We can all recollect times when Robinson Crusoe and Peter Wilkins's wonderful adventures were perused with enthusiastic rapture—when our little heart panted within us as we read, and, whilst we trembled at their danger, felt something like a longing to " go down to the sea in ships, and see the wonders of the great deep." Such, nay infinitely more ardent, were the feelings of our young friend Rodney, whilst he turned over or listened to voyages of discovery, accounts of battles the most honourable to Britannia's fame, or the lives and achievements of renowned naval officers: he not only felt the longing I have (and I believe with justice) ascribed to the generality of youthful readers of romantic peril, but determinately fixed upon encountering the dangers of the seas, and looked forward to the years which must necessarily elapse before he could sail forth in quest of adventures, as a prospect which, like an unobstructed view of the ocean, seemed to him interminable.

CHAPTER VIII.

But blythest laugh'd that'cheek and eye When Rokeby's little maid was nigh:

Primrose he twin'd with daisy fair
To form a chaplet for her hair;
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand in hand;
And good sir Richard smiling eyed
The early knot so kindly tied.

WALTER SCOTT.

ONLY those who have been engaged in a darling pursuit with such enthusiasm as to render it

"Their daily vision and their dream by night,"

can suppose the celerity (notwithstanding his fears to the contrary) with which. according to Rodney's conception, the six years succeeding his establishment at Napperton Abbey glided away. At their conclusion, little, if any alteration was traccable in the persons or situations of old Mr. St. Paul's household, unless we except the rapid growth, increased information, and confirmed predilection for the sea service evidently conspicuous in his protegé; the ancient worthy still flourished like a healthy evergreen in full foliage; though in the winter of extreme age, Mrs. Mary's rheumatics had not made a deeper inroad into her constitution than when we left her; Sympson continued his visits, lieutenant Hatchway was unremittingly busy with the education of his attentive scholar, and Mr.

Mr. Sharkem seemed, with each revolving day, to increase in attention and kindness. The neighbours, with their usual lack of charitable interpretation, ascribed this marked assiduity to motives far from disinterested, and complimented their own sagacity highly when they whispered it from circle to circle, that the cunning lawyer was manœuvering to lay the foundation of an attachment between the little sailor and his daughter Fanny, which must lead to their marriage and the ultimate succession of his descendants to the envied domains of Napperton: what rendered this conjecture plausible was, that Frances Sharkem almost invariably accompanied her papa to Mr. St. Paul's, and spent the time of her sojourning there in rambling about with Rodney, or viewing

viewing admiral Hatchway's fleet riding at anchor in the Abbey fish-ponds.

"And how, pray, can we account for this arrangement, when Mr. Sharkem has sons who go with him everywhere else, except by attributing it to a desire of throwing his little girl as much as possible in the way of the presumptive heir of Napperton?" was the general interrogation.

Another demonstrative proof of the correctness of these suspicions was the peculiar interest which the attorney seemed to take in every thing which concerned the old squire's favourite; he was perpetually inviting him to his house, presenting him with books, charts, quadrants, models of ships, &c.; and when he heard Hatchway announce his pupil as fully competent to the duties

of a midshipman, without waiting for a request from Mr. St. Paul, during one of his frequent professional visits to London applied at the Admiralty, and procured him an appointment on board one of his majesty's first-rate men-of-war.

Nothing could have pleased the old squire of Napperton half so much as this unsolicited attention to his darling scheme, for it almost insured him (which, at his great age, was all that could be reasonably expected) an opportunity of witnessing his adopted child's introduction to his profession, and gave a chance for observing his progress in it.

If Sharkem's officiousness was merely designed to gratify his ancient friend and neighbour, he must have been abundantly repaid by hearing him exclaim, after after his return from town—" This is truly kind and attentive, Sharkem; I shall feel eternally obliged by it. The lad shall most certainly accept the appointment; old as I am, I will go with him to Portsmouth, and if you can spare time from business, you shall be the companion of our journey."

As may be expected, Sharkem's answer was to this purport:—" Business, my dear, worthy, ever-excellent friend, never has been, and I trust never will be let, hindrance, obstacle, or impediment in the way of my obliging, serving, and obeying you at all times, seasons, periods, occasions, and opportunities. At an hour's notice I shall be ready to attend you and our promising little Rodney."

Again, if the solicitor's views extended

ed as far as the ingenious gossips imagined, even to the remote prospect of a union between two children now only ten years of age, these juvenile objects of his solicitude appeared anxious to convince him he was by no means labouring in vain, for they evinced, from the very first of their acquaintance, every ostensible proof of a deep-rooted attachment: no toil appeared wearisome, no adventure perilous to Rodney, when happiness could be procured to little Fanny; not an apple, walnut, or bird's nest, on which she cast the eye of desire, was perched high enough to be beyond our young hero's squirrel-like agility; his favourite first-rate man-of-war was christened (by breaking a bottle of his old cousin's best October on her stern) " The lovely Fanny;" his fleet-

footed

footed greyhound, of major Topham's true Snowball breed, was entitled "Miss Sharkem's Delight."

In return for these and similarly-acceptable services and compliments, Fanny was always ready to smile a sweet reward upon master Rodney St. Paul; at the dancing-school she never performed her steps with half the required grace or exactness if he were not her partner; the walnut, filbert, or apple, were thrown tway untasted, or had no flavour, unless presented by his hand.

That this mutually-conspicuous penchant was equally understood and approved by old Mr. St. Paul, appears quite certain, from his repeatedly distinguishing Fanny Sharkem by the epithet of "Rodney's little wife:" this designation was at the same time generally succeeded

succeeded by one quite as acceptable to those who had the interest of Rodney at heart, for it encouraged a confident hope that he was certainly designed to inherit Napperton.

"When 'our admiral' has struck his flag, and come to anchor-for life," would the old gentleman exclaim over his evening punch, "Fanny promises fair to render Napperton Abbey as pleasant as I trust it will prove a secure harbour against the storms of life."

From the day on which the young sailor's appointment on board the —— was announced at Napperton, the greatest activity prevailed, both there and at Marton, in those departments by whose exertions he was to be equipped for sea: every needle was soon in requisition; even the sweet Fanny contributed her

mite to her beloved mariner's stores, for she sent in six black silk neckkerchicfs, neatly hemmed and marked by her own pretty fingers: this present was of course highly acceptable, and not the less so because it bore unequivocal vestiges that the tender-hearted sempstress had moistened it with her tears. With true lover-like gratitude, Rodney repaid this gift with a cornelian necklace, centered by a pendent double heart, which he tied on himself, and ventured to accompany with a tender salute.

Poor Mrs. William St. Paul was grievously afflicted when she found that, contrary to her wishes, her youngest hope was about to embark in the perils of a sailor's life.—" Ah!" sighed she, "what a risk we run for the chance of the Napperton estates, which, after all, may.

may, through the caprice of their present proprietor, be left for the endowment of an 'old bachelor's hospital,' or some to us equally unimportant establishment!—Had I really anticipated Rodney's initiation into such a hazardous avocation, I would not have parted with him for the reversion of all our extensive county."

"My dear love," answered Mr. William to this and similar complaints, "do but consider the great probability that our boy may dislike the naval service, and quit it after a cruise or two: the same interest that obtained his appointment will easily procure his discharge. Remember, too, the chance, nay almost certainty (if I do not totally misinterpret 'my old cousin's' insinuations and Sharkem's repeated hints) of his compliance

pliance with the wishes of his patron being rewarded with a freehold inheritance of four thousand pounds per annum."

For once in her life Mrs. William St. Paul allowed pecuniary hopes to silence her expression of maternal fears; they did not however extinguish them, for never mother felt more than herself when she folded her little sailor to her bosom for the last time previous to his journey into Hampshire.

Fanny Sharkem was unquestionably her partner in affliction, though by no means an equal sufferer—her years softened alarming apprehensions in proportion as they encouraged sanguine hopes; she looked forward with the confidence of inexperience to the literal fulfilment

of old Mr. St. Paul's prophecies, which were impressed upon her mind by daily repetition; she saw, in her mind's eye, the object of her youthful love return, crowned with laurels, renowned for enterprise and discovery; she heard him relating exploits and adventures, miraculous and romantic as any on record; the gold lace of his well-earned uniform already glittered in her sight—his admiral's flag waved on the wings of the wind; more, ten thousand times more delightful than any of these reviving hopes, she felt herself pressed to the bosom of her hero, heard herself declared to the world his favourite, and seemed already his companion, the charmed auditress of his interesting narrations.

With such warm visions glowing on her

her mind, it will not be regarded surprising that, though her tears flowed copiously and her sighs were deep, as she received her Rodney's last adieus, her heart felt not that inexpressible, almost suffocating pang, which rises when we contemplate, as if for the last time, a lover or a friend on the eve of being separated from us, for an indefinite space of time, by immeasurable leagues of ocean.

Wind and weather conspired to detain Rodney at Napperton Abbey several weeks beyond what was originally expected. Mrs. William, who, like a drowning person, snatched at the slenderest twig of hope, construed this into an omen that something would yet occur to prevent her little Rodney's devol. I.

1 parture.

170 MY OLD COUSIN.

parture. Alas! like many other equally sanguine anticipators, she was disappointed.

CHAPTER IX.

Ah me! ah never, never thence to part!
How deep his form is imag'd in my heart!
How ev'ry action to my sight appears!
How ev'ry word still vibrates in my ears!

TASSO'S RINALDO.

THE morning at length came when Mr. St. Paul, accompanied by his cousin of Marton, old Sharkem, Hatchway, and the young sailor, set forward towards Portsmouth.

When it is recollected what an extent of country stretches out between the eastern division of the large county

of York and Hampshire, the reader will readily join me in considering this journey a most wonderful exertion for a man in his ninety-seventh year, as wonderful perhaps as many of those extraordinary feats which, in opposition to time, and every former calculation of human power and strength, have pretty frequently astonished the islanders of Britain during the last twenty years. That the venerable traveller completed his undertaking with ease, and without particular symptoms of fatigue, may probably be ascribed to that invigorating stimulus which seldom fails to keep alive the spirits when we draw near the completion of a long-cherished project.

Poor Mrs. William was far from sympathizing with the feelings of the old squire, for the moment the carriage which

which contained her son had driven from the door (for it called at Marton to allow of a parting embrace), the philosophy with which she seemed to press her darling to her bosom gave way to tears, lamentations, and painful feelings of self-accusation that she had allowed any consideration to elicit her consent to his departure; far from partaking of Miss Sharkem's delightful anticipations, to her perturbed fancy every circumstance respecting Rodney was in sombre shade; the sea on which he was about to embark presented nothing but boisterous waves never sated with devouring unfortunate mariners, quicksands that the most experienced navigators could not avoid, and rocks which, like the iron mountain of the Arabian Nights, or the magnetic island of Peter Wilkins,

irresistibly attracted every ship which approached them.

These and other equally painful considerations were fortunately diverted by the apropos arrival of Fanny Sharkem on her little pony. . This amiable child, who loved Rodney with a degree of tenderness which, notwithstanding her romantic visions of the future, rendered parting from him agonizingly painful, not finding a bosom at home on which to sob out her grief and shed her "natural tears," without fear of ridicule rather than commiseration, no sooner lost sight of the carriage in which her favourite travelled, than she mounted her little horse for a morning's airing, and, attended by her accustomed groom, proceeded instantly to Marton.

On arriving there, without waiting for

for the ceremony of introduction, she tripped immediately up stairs to Mrs. William's boudoir. Floods of tears for several minutes prevented conversation; Fanny was the first who made her trembling accents heard,—" Dear Mrs. St. Paul," cried she, with a firmness at her age surprising, as it proved her exempt from the childish selfishness which generally attends to its own sufferings, to the utter neglect of those of others-" my dear Mrs. St. Paul, I did not come to make you ery in this manner; I did not intend to cry so myself, but when L beheld you so afflicted, I could not help it. I came to talk to you more about Rodney's return than his going away, and how grown he would be and Ishould be, and how charming it would be to hear him tell of all he had seen,

176' MY OLD COUSIN.

and how pleased old Mr. St. Paul would be, and Mrs. Mary, and how——"

"You are a dear, good, obliging girl," returned Mrs. William, "and I am sensible how much I owe you for this considerate attention. You must visit me as often as you can; the encouraging prospects you hold out will soften and even shorten Rodney's absence more than any thing else can do."

Fanny promised compliance, and Mrs. William reiterated her assurance how glad she should be to see her at all times and seasons.

The conference was here interrupted by one of the Miss St. Pauls, who had retired to a window in order to weep their mutual privation in secret, exclaiming—" Well, I declare, here is Mrs. Mary St. Paul's old carriage drawing up to the garden-gate. I never knew her venture so far from Napperton Abbey before."

"How good it is of her!" said Mrs. William, smiling through her tears, like the sun through an April shower, "how very good of her to thus come and help you to comfort me, girls, in this my hour of trial!"

"Perhaps," said the young lady who spake before, with a sigh, "she may come with a hope of being comforted rather than to comfort; I am sure she must need the soothing balm, for I am certain she will find the want of our lively little Rodney most severely."

A moment's silence ensued; it was broken by the recent speaker, in language marked by emphasis which told more forcibly of astonishment than even her announcement of the ancient spinster's supposed arrival from the Abbey.

—" Dear me!" cried she, "after all, it is not Mrs. Mary—it is only the empty chaise."

"The empty chaise!" repeated Mrs. William; and the whole party, though not in the same words, yet to the same effect, and nearly in the same breath, added an opinion that the old lady must be ill, dying, or dead; and whichever might prove to be the case, attributed it entirely to the young sailor's departure.

The suspense under which they now laboured was not of very protracted duration, for it ended on the entrance of a note, the superscription of which proved that the venerable mistress of the Abbey was living, for it was written in

that neat Italian character in fashion with our grandmothers. Mrs. William read its contents aloud:—

" MY DEARE MADAM,

"The loss of our precious Rod ney, and the absence of my worthic brother, to which, throughout our length of daies, I have been but seldom accustomed, affect me so grievouslie, that I am fain to desire you to favour me with your good companie to-day, and if convenience suit—you see I am a right bold beggar—even until the return of your husband to Marton, and that of my still nearer kinsman, namely, my brother, to this his abode.

"My humble friend and serving woman, Mary Johnson, informs me that Miss Frances Sharkem passed by the 16 Abbey Abbey this morning on her galloway, so I doubt not but she is with you at the present: should this my conjecture prove well founded, bring her hither-I will endeavoure to retaine her during your sojourne in this place, and shall send a petition to that effect forthwith to her mother. We cannot, as I am sure you are duly sensible, bear witness of regard to oure boy more properly than by attending to one he loves so truelie, and who, if I mistake not strangelie, will require oure caresses to reconcile her to her loss.

"I pray God to have you and yours in his good and holie keeping, and rest your loving cousin and friend,

"MARY SAINT PAUL.

"Dated at Napperton Abbey, this 22d day of July 1790."

[&]quot; I must

tus,

- "I must go most certainly," cried Mrs. William, without waiting for comment or remark on her ancient kinswoman's friendly epistle: " will you, my dear Fanny, accompany me?"
- " Yes, madam," returned the sweet girl, "and I shall be so glad to do it! it is just what I wished. I should like, of all things in the world, to please good Mrs. Mary, and to do every possible thing for her, for she was always so kind, so very kind to poor Roddy!—I have heard him say a thousand times that he loved her next to you and—" me seemed upon her lip, but she did not articulate it plain enough to be quite audible; and as if anxious that her designed expression should escape notice altogether, added-" his papa and his sisters, and again she left a hia-

tus, and again went on—" Mamma, I am sure, will have no objection, for she is never better pleased than when I go to the Abbey; so I shall venture to send John back with the pony and an account of where I may be found."

If we may be allowed to judge from the countenances of the Misses St. Paul. they were not, from some cause or other. over and above pleased with their mother's intended visit: perhaps they might be actuated with a desire of accompanying her, which could not possibly be done, as they were not included in Mrs. Mary's invitation; this, I am inclined to think, was really the case, as they had often been heard to express an inclination for seeing the curious old Abbey: perhaps, to venture another guess, they, with a feeling too general, I am sorry to

say, for the credit of "poor human nature," were a little jealous that Fanny should be noticed and themselves overlooked by their spinster cousin.

Mrs. William, of course, intimately acquainted with the dispositions of her daughters, and consequently able to judge how existing circumstances were likely to affect them, softened all asperities in a moment, by saying, in an affectionate tone of voice—" I look upon it as highly fortunate that Mrs. Mary St. Paul did not include you, Margaret, or indeed any of you, in her kind invitation, as it would have deprived me of an opportunity of observing how cleverly you can manage the family during my absence. Perhaps, if I find you can do well without me, I shall be tempted

to go with your papa to Buxton, which I believe would be, of all plans, the most likely to put to flight those rheumatic symptoms which have tormented me for the last two or three winters."

The prospect of "a little brief authority" has reconciled many more experienced and important personages than the young ladies of Morton to arrangements which at first view seemed disagreeable; the idea that they were, though but pro tempore, to be installed mistresses of their father's house, therefore it will not, I should presume, be thought extraordinary, took away every thing like regret that they were not, at present, to be introduced at Napperton Abbey; it even did more than this, for it kindled a general alacrity to select

and pack up such articles of dress as their mother must necessarily take along with her. In half an hour all preparations were complete, and Mrs. William St. Paul, along with Fanny Sharkem, stepped into Mrs. Mary's chaise, and pursued their road to the village of Napperton.

The amiable spinster was delighted with their early appearance, and still better satisfied when, in answer to her interrogation—" Shall I order the carriage to take you back to Marton this evening?" Mrs. William replied—" I am at your service, my dear madam, as long as you think proper to retain me."

Many hours elapsed not before the arrival of a man-servant from Mrs. Sharkem, with a bundle of clothes for Miss

Miss Fanny and a note of permission for her continuance at the Abbey during Mr. St. Paul's absence.

No trio in the world could be more likely to harmonize than that we have now assembled at Napperton: Rodney was the centre round which they perpetually rallied; he formed alike the theme of their conversation and the subject of their thoughts; neither was the remembrance of him lost, even when they pressed the pillow of repose-nay, it was then more particularly that he reigned the conspicuous, I may say the exclusive object of regard; then it was that Mrs. Mary beheld visibly embodied that favourite on whom she durst not flatter herself her mortal orbs should ever rest: again she gazed on his intelligent eye, sparkling

she

sparkling with animation at the narratives of Hatchway, or the written records of those departed worthies whose glory he panted to equal; then she relistened to his lively remarks, resaw him actively bounding across the court, and, with all the eagerness of an enthusiastic commander, manœuvring his Lilliputian fleet on the waters of the pond. Awakening from such delightful visions, with the feeble chance afforded by extreme age of seeing them realized, too strongly resembled a return to the vicissitudes of earth from the certainties of Elysium, to be unaccompanied by a sigh of regret.

Mrs. William, too, had her dreams, though not the same reluctance at being convinced they were so; contrariwise, she felt a genuine delight to find them only dreams, for they generally placed poor Rodney on board a vessel just foundering, or, at best, made him the inhabitant of a desart island, far remote from his native country, and without a hope of revisiting its white cliffs and verdant lawns.

Fanny's imagination, during the season of slumber, was also certain to restore the appearance of the lamented absentee; but, excepting when she had been listening late of an evening to the hoarse croaking raven of Mrs. William's foreboding apprehensions, his appearance was so smiling, the scenery around him so bright with sunshine, the sea on which his tight-rigged vessel floated so gently undulating, that she regarded opening

opening her eyes on the grey walls of Napperton Abbey, unenlivened by his presence, as one of the greatest misfortunes that could have befallen her.

CHAPTER X.

L'aube du jour t'a va partir, Yseult, n'es-in pas facigué?

Journeying on from break of day,
Feel you not fatigued, sir knight?

From the Spanish—Tristan de Llonors.

By the very first post that could be expected to bring tidings of the travellers, Mrs. William St. Paul received the following letter from her excellent husband:—

" DEAREST GIRL,

"Fortunately the time at which the mail departs hence not only allows me to announce our safe arrival, but likewise to enter pretty minutely into particulars which will interest you considerably.

"To proceed methodically, Mr. St. Paul felt as few inconveniences from travelling as the youngest of our party, and instead of complaining that our day's journey, according to the prescribed route, was tedious, invariably exclaimed—'We ought to go forward at least a stage farther.'

"Rodney, you will have no difficulty in guessing, seconded the motion manfully; of course it was carried, and by that means we got here nearly twelve hours earlier than we expected.

"Never must I forget the rapturous emotions excited in our little sailor by the first appearance of this extraordinary place: to allow him the full enjoyment of it, Mr. St. Paul consented that he should mount the barouche-box.

"The view, which is one of the noblest that imagination can conceive, by designedly deviating a little from the direct road, first opened upon us from the downs above Porchester Castle: to the right we beheld Gosport, with its battery protecting the mouth of the finest harbour in the world; on the opposite isthmus stands the large and busy town of Portsmouth: behind, stretched out in leagues immeasurable, heave the waves of Albion's invaluable barrier, the ocean; on them ride that majestic fleet justly entitled ' The wooden Walls of old England,' well deserving of the broom once proudly exhibited by the Dutch admiral Van Tromp, as emblematic of his having swept the seas of

every other navy: we counted no less than one hundred first-rate men-of-war, among them some carrying above a hundred guns. Beyond these striking objects the Isle of Wight, distant about six miles, beautifully breaks in upon the monotony of a sea-view. Such was the sublimity of the scene, that we compelled our postilions to stop more than half an hour before we were satisfied with contemplating it.

- "We could not have come here at a time when every thing around wore an appearance more imposing; the streets were thronged with passengers in their holiday array, the guns were firing, bells ringing, colours hoisted.
- "Rodney (you will at first doubt the assertion) felt not the exhilaration which might at his time of life be the expected VOL. I. K produce

produce of such festive sounds and sights; on the contrary, he stooped from his seat and called in at the carriage-window, in most dolorous tones—'Oh, papa! I am afraid the dispute with Spain is all settled: what else can, be the occasion of these rejoicings? The ships, I dare say, will be all paid off—I shall not get to sea after all.'

"I hoped as carnestly as he could possibly fear that these conjectures might prove correct, but soon was convinced that, agreeable to the young gentleman's desire, in the present instance he was no true prophet: the first person bawled to Rodney and the driver that the cause of the bustle was the arrival of lord Howe to take command of the grand fleet; this was instantaneously communicated to us, and in accents very different from

those

those to which we had but a few minutes before attended. The information was corroborated by the vociferations of almost every one who passed us in the streets, for we could distinctly hear the name of the brave and noble admiral mingled in their conversation.

"On drawing up to the hotel, many minutes occurred before a waiter could find time to approach our carriage and inform us they had not any kind of accommodation, not even a room at liberty, in which we could take a short refreshment. At the next inn we were but very little more fortunate, for though they allowed us to alight, and handed us into a respectable-looking sitting-room, we were almost immediately told that the apartment could not be considered our exclusive property, and that

they had not a bed to offer us 'for love or money.'

" It occurred to me that lodgings would be infinitely more desirable for my aged kinsman than a house of public resort at such a bustling season; therefore I immediately proceeded to the maître d'hotel, and requested him to point some out to us, observing, what I thought would secure his attention to our request, that we should be provided from his larder and cellar during our stay at Portsmouth. The bait took, and in a very short time he recollected accommodations that would, to use his expression, 'suit us to a T.'

"On application at the place he recommended, I found the terms as enormous as the most rapacious harpy at Brighton, when the prince is down, could think of demanding; but on terms we did not parley—comfort and quietness were the things required, and I think, from all we have yet seen, we have found them. The rooms are good, and so en suite that only a door separates me from "my old cousin," which will enable me to see all his wants, by day or night, properly attended to.

"Whilst I was settling these momentous affairs, Rodney and his preceptor
Hatchway made their escape, and returned not for some hours—the former
in the most exuberant spirits: he had
seen the dockyards, been on board several king's ships, and I dare say, if we
had exclusively attended to his harangue, would have occupied the sole
remainder of the day in enumerating
the names of all the vessels at Ports-

mouth, and the various engagements in which each had signalized herself.

"Mr. St. Paul was so charmed with the enthusiasm of our animated boy, that he repeatedly embraced him, and as often drank the health of 'the young admiral.'

"To-morrow morning (by the way, I do not think the little fellow will sleep much to-night), immediately after breakfast, we are to go on board Rodney's ship, and be introduced in form to his messmates and the captain. My good cousin determines, and you know there is no altering his resolves, to be of the party. What an undertaking for so aged a man! a man, too, who has never before quitted terra firma during the whole of his protracted life.

" Between ourselves, Sharkem has no great

great relish for our 'voyage,' as ne calls it; he cannot, I suppose, divest himself of the recollection that a man who ventures on the water has but a single plank between him and eternity, and perhaps he does not feel quite ready to embark for that unknown, and what is still more alarming, endless country.

"I expect in the morning to hear either of his indisposition, or his influence having prevailed upon my venerable friend to remain ashore: without one of these occurrences, he can have no pretence for staying behind us.

"Rodney and the whole party beg to join in kindest wishes for you all (Fanny of course included) with, my dearest love,

"Yours, most faithfully and affectionately,

" WILLIAM ST. PAUL."

κ 4 This

This letter was a seasonable relief to the anxiety which naturally pervaded the minds of Mrs. Mary and her visitors, whilst those the most dear and near to them were exposed, in a distant part of the country, to the unavoidable perils of travelling: it was soon succeeded by another communication, in which Mr. William informed them, that at the time appointed they attended Rodney to his ship, and were highly gratified with their little voyage, which was performed on one of the loveliest mornings that could possibly be conceived.— "Every thing around," wrote he, "wore that hilarity of aspect which fails not to operate with meliorating influence on all, however distressed, and which the superstitious hesitate not to interpret as ominous of success: the sun shone in a cloudless cloudless sky, the green waves were just rippled by the zephyr-like breath of heaven-that breath, too, was a 'favouring gale,' gently swelling the sail of our boat, and bearing it, without the aid of oars, towards the grand fleet: parties going to and returning from the menof-war, many of them with bands of music on board, all with colours floating on the light breeze, gave animation to the scene; and, as if to complete the magical effect of the whole, we had not proceeded half our way when the joyous Rodney descried lord Howe's state barge, almost innumerably attended. conveying him on board the ——, where we had soon after the gratification of witnessing the ceremony of hoisting a union jack. The gaieté de cœur produced by these concomitant circumstances enabled us to behold Rodney ascend the side of the ship, where we were to leave him, with a firmness scarcely to be expected from an inland father, and a friend whose years likened it to a farewell leave-taking.

"The survey of the ship afforded us high amusement, and, what was infinitely more important in our estimation, introduced us, in the person of the captain, to a man whose aspect and manner were sufficiently prepossessing to reconcile me in a great degree to leaving Rodney under his care and superintendance. The chaplain, too, who attends to the education of those midshipmen whose parents think proper to employ him as a tutor, had such a recommendatory countenance as made me unhesitatingly solicit his direction to

our boy's studies, as far as they came within his province.

- "The midshipmen are in general Rodney's seniors, but not so much so as to unfit them for his companions: one of them is sir T——s L——'s son, of our county, and the remainder young men of family and connexions highly respectable.
- "I am thus minute, from a hope that your knowledge of our son's present associates may in some measure reconcile you to the profession in which he has now formally embarked.
- "Sharkem, as I expected if he failed in his attempts to detain Mr. St. Paul on shore, 'was not well enough to attend us.'
 - "Our return to Portsmouth, though k 6 shone

shone upon by the same bright heaven, and surrounded by accompaniments in themselves as lively as those of our morning's voyage, was nevertheless dull and uninteresting. You will find no difficulty in accounting for this; you will look back, as we did, and behold the cause in the person of Rodney gazing on us from his ship, and waving his handkerchief in token of adieu, as we mutually lessened on each other's view."

The remainder of the letter was occupied with the business of the day, and the probability which the increased number of commissioned ships, and the constant bustle of the shipyards, gave to an opinion that war between Great Britain and Spain was inevitable.

In a postscript, Mr. William added that in the course of a very few days he expected they would be retracing their steps to Yorkshire.

Enclosed in the above-mentioned epistle were two of smaller dimensions. one of them addressed to "Miss Sharkem:" both were from the pen of the young sailor, and though pathetically expressive of sorrow at parting from them, yet rapturously enthusiastic in praise of his selected profession, and sanguinely confident he should return to them in safety, and provided with an ample store of amusement for many a long winter's evening, over the comfortable fireside of Napperton Abbey.

"That we shall sail soon, very soon, seems the general opinion," he observed

in the letter to his mother, " and the sailors appear quite delighted at the idea; I am sure, for one, I am truly so, and long most heartily to hear the signal-guns which will summon 'all hands on board.' Papa will have it that the sailors would like better to be ashore, if it were not for the Spanish dollars with which they hope to fall in. Mr. Hatchway says that the dollars are 'all very well in their way,' but maintains it, that the glory of licking the proud dons is the thing which the Jacks like best; and I am sure I believe him, for I care not a single straw for all the dollars in the world; and yet I do nothing but think of all day, and dream of all night, pouring broadsides into the Spanish ships. I am sure we shall drub them.

if they will but give us a chance, for Hatchway also tells me that six of the dons, with all their boasting, are not equal to one true British tar; and every soul on board says just the same thing.

" Lieutenant Hatchway is quite the delight of our messe; he messes, you see, with us, by permission of the captain, so long as Mr. St. Paul thinks fitting to remain at Portsmouth: and it is one of the most laughable things in the world to see him stump about our cabin, with his long queue, hat set aside, and cheek almost crammed with tobacco, threatening the Spaniards with deadly vengeance for their interference with the English settlement at Nootka Sound, and telling them to bid good-bye to their dollars and their bullion.

[&]quot; I hope

"I hope we shall fall in with the rascals; for though, as I said before, I want none of their dollars, yet I should like to have a few of my own gaining to present to you, and Fanny, and Mrs. Mary St. Paul, as curiosities."

As it appeared the general opinion that lord Howe would sail for Torbay in the course of a very few days, Mr. St. Paul determined on continuing at least a week at Portsmouth after the date of the last quoted-from epistle: this arrangement (perfectly agreeable to his party) answered his purpose completely, for it enabled him to be an eyewitness of little Rodney's first departure from Albion's far-famed coast, and at the same time presented the finest spectacle in the world—a grand fleet of more

than

than forty sail of the line weighing anchor for sea.

As long as the glass assisted the decaying sight of the old squire to view the vessel which contained "his admiral" (as he styled our friend Rodney), he remained on the Point, and in tolerable spirits; but the veil of distance was no sooner drawn over the object of his regard, than he broke out into exclamations indicative of violent sorrow that he had been accessary to banishing one whom he loved so well, most probably for ever from his presence.

What magical cause could produce a more extraordinary effect than did this painful recollection on the prospects of old Mr. St. Paul?—The sun which smiled above him in cloudless glory,

the balmy breeze of spring, the sparkling emerald-waves, the joyous combination of sounds and sights, in a moment lost all their invigorating influence—a sombre cloud, to his disordered imagination, enveloped the atmosphere he breathed, and gave to every surrounding object a funereal gloom.

Long did he linger within view of the ocean—often, whilst the big tears traced each other down his furrowed cheeks, he exclaimed—"Alas! I now perceive, when too late, my absurdity in making this poor fellow's Christian name imperatively designate his profession. What had he to do with a profession, or I to recommend one?—My fault, like almost every other human error, has produced its proper punish-

ment—I have deprived myself of what Heaven meant to be the solace of 'life's last scenes'-on him, in this world, my eyes will gaze no more. Can you forgive me, cousin William, for having thus separated you from your lovely and promising child? Will your wife? will Mary? will Fanny?—Oh no! oh no! Of one thing I am quite sure—I never can forgive myself. All left for me to do now is to 'pray without ceasing' that he may be restored to you in health and safety, and it shall not be neglected."

By words Mr. William could not attempt to calm the tumult of his venerable relative's mind—a parent situated like him is no orator. By the dumb eloquence of looks, by affectionate pres-

sures of the hand, however, he endeavoured to sooth. An attempt, with the same benevolent design, was likewise made by Mr. Sharkem-the dear, the good, the excellent Mr. Sharkem, and in his most honied accents. Nor was lieutenant Hatchway silent on the occasion; he declaimed most energetically on the glorious privilege of belonging to his majesty's navy, the certainty that the approaching contest would terminate in humbling the haughty dons, and exalting the naval character of Great Britain; and ended with a strongly-worded prophecy of Rodney's destined celebrity.

All, alas! argued equally in vain the self-accusing old man seemed determined to refuse consolation in whatever shape, shape, dress, or manner it approached, and tottered home to his lodgings in a state of agitation which made the surrounding friendly group tremble for the effect it might produce upon his health.

That Mr. St. Paul himself had similar fears it is not unreasonable to conjecture, from the circumstance of his immediately summoning Sharkem to a private interview in his bedchamber, and employing him in drawing up his last will and testament—a fact almost immediately published in the family by the report of the master of the house and his two sons, who were called upon as subscribing witnesses. The execution of this important document, which probably the dislike alluded to in the early part of this work, of having his intended heir known to any but himself, had made him thus long defer, seemed in a considerable degree to have composed his mind, for he afterwards sat down to supper with tolerable calmness, and smoked his subsequent pipe with a complacency of demeanour scarcely to be expected when the hand of Rodney, which had for the last four years regularly folded and presented his paperlighters, was no longer extended to assist him.

A soothing night-draught, prepared from his Yorkshire physician's recipe, and administered by the attentive Mr. William, procured the worthy old gentleman a night of uninterrupted sleep, which had such a restorative effect, that the following day shone upon him so altogether

altogether himself, that he requested they might commence their travels home without delay.

CHAPTER XI.

Soon as they mov'd beyond the city bounds,
Th' attentive friend topography expounds,
Declares the owner of each seat, relates
His pedigree progressive through its dates,
Makes various th' advancing road beguile
And vest instruction with amusement's smile.
At the still hour when soher Evening draws
Aiong the fading scene her veil of gauze.
The spiry tow'rs beginning to appear,
Announce the hoary domes of learning near.

DR. BROWN'S Philemon.

PROTRACTED preparations were unnecessary for our home-bound travellers; to the ancient city of Winchester they were

were therefore able to proceed that veryevening.

Mr. William having the choice of their route northward, and aware of his old cousin's taste for antiquities, with a laudable desire of diverting his mind from the recent privation, contrived to introduce as many objects of that description into their journey as possible; and from the good effect produced by a survey of the ancient walls, gateways, and buildings-above all, the venerable cathedral of Winchester, the tomb of many a royal and sacred personage, he was convinced that he could not have devised an expedient more likely to insure success.

Oxford next presented

" Her fretted pinnacles, her fanes sublime, Her tow'rs that wear the mossy vest of time; At once the pride of learning and defence;

Her cloisters' pale, that, length'ning to the sight,

To contemplation step by step invite;

Her high-arch'd walks, where oft the whispers clear

Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear *."

Among these they wandered with so much satisfaction, that three days elapsed before the ancient squire gave the word for resuming the march; even the charges for this long sojourn at the Star Inn were considered reasonable, when the treat which perambulating the university was taken into the account.

Straight lines are said to be invariably destructive of beauty; this I conclude that Mr. William St. Paul thought held good, even in travelling, for more serpentine movements were seldom observable in any journey than that he

was now directing: instead of pursuing the regular road to Warwick, they branched off for Gloucestershire, and paid a visit to Berkeley Castle, than which there is not a finer or better kept specimen remaining in England of the baronial residence of former times; it was just the spot to delight Mr. St. Paul, and he would have been gratified fully if he could have divested his mind of the recollection that the walls which encompassed him were stained with blood—the courts which he trod had cchoed with the expiring cries of the most cruelly-murdered king, Edward the Second.

If he were thus gratified at Berkeley, what may we not suppose his feelings to have been, on approaching those stately battlements which once o'er-ca-

L 2 nopied

nopied the renowned Guy earl of Warwick, and yet form the princely residence of his noble representatives?—
Here all the splendours of Gothic magnificence burst upon him at once: the grand gateway, opening through a machicolated curtain of communication between two embattled towers, in itself a study for the antiquary, threw him into ecstacies, the charm of which dissolved not until the guide announced that they had gone through every part of the castle.

With feelings similar to those of a poet, who, after wandering many " a charmed hour" in the regions of imagination, is obliged to descend to the common paths and every-day circumstances of life—or those of a young female, who, from reveries of majors and captains, is roused.

roused, like sir Arthur Acheson's lady in dean Swift, with Hannah's information that some "rusty dull rum" of a parson has called on her to walk-with feelings, I repeat, like these, did Mr. St. Paul turn his steps from Warwick Castle, and "take his melancholy way" to the ___ Inn, where the modern furniture, and a large sasked window, admitting, instead of "a dim religious light," the vulgar blaze of day, could scarcely convince him he was not living in the age when the scenes which had so strongly captivated his fancy were peopled "by knights in mail, and helmet-proof."

The next place at which they paused was the busy town of Birmingham, which containing nothing " in the old squire's way," he was not sorry to quit

L 3 though

though he had that consideration for the taste of others, not to do so without allowing sufficient time for his compagnons de voyage to go through the usual shew-places.

The Soho surprised them with its multiplicity of articles, from the ponderous steam-engine to the minutest toy. Clay's manufactory completely astonished, for in it they beheld the most correct and luminous imitations of the choicest India cabinet-ware produced from the very coarsest species of brown paper.

At Derby, the silk-mills and porcelain-works came in for a full share of admiration, and naturally gave birth to the reflection that "the English gentry display as little taste as patriotism when they send abroad for articles of shew and luxury, which they might obtain at home infinitely more elegant in design and execution."

In gratitude for the old gentleman's patience in not hurrying-away his friends from these wonderful exhibitions of human ingenuity, Mr. William contrived him a particularly acceptable reward, by conducting him unexpectedly to Haddon Hall and Hardwick, the former belonging to the R-d family, the latter to the D- of D-. They may both, in some respects, be considered as deserted mansions, and can neither of them, in any respect, bear a comparison with the castles of Warwick or Berkeley; yet each had some peculiar charm which recommended it strongly to the owner of Napperton Abbey: Hardwick in particular presented specimens of ancient cient furniture extremely curious and well preserved; and, what added to their importance, in one of the apartments the high-canopied bed, stuffed chairs, and their accompaniments, had remained without the smallest change since used by the unfortunate Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, during the early part of her confinement under the earl of Shrewsbury: this circumstance prepared them to read, with more than common interest—

"Buxton! whose fame thy baths will ever tell, Whem I perhaps shall see no more, farewell!"

signed "Maria Scotiæ," which they found preserved on an ancient square of glass in their sleeping-quarters, "the Hall," at Buxton.

Such frequent and considerable deviations from the direct road delayed their arrival

arrival at Napperton Abbey so many days beyond the time when Mr. William's letter, announcing their departure from Portsmouth, requested that his old cousin's bed and apartment might be well aired, as to occasion no small degree of alarm to the affectionate Mrs. Mary; for, aware of her brother's general punctuality in fulfilling engagements, she could not avoid ascribing his nonappearance to illness. Seasonable, therefore, truly seasonable was the relief afforded when she beheld Mr. St. Paul's travelling carriage stop at the gate, and saw him alight from it with an activity quite equal to that he had exhibited on departure.

Aware of his sister's companions during his absence, Mr. St. Paul had intimated to her, through the medium of his amanuensis, that he was them to continue at the Abbey until he felt himself quite re-established there after his return; and this he delayed acknowledging for such a length of time, that a truly welcome epistle from Rodney had reached Napperton before the family-party were dispersed.

END OF VOL. I.